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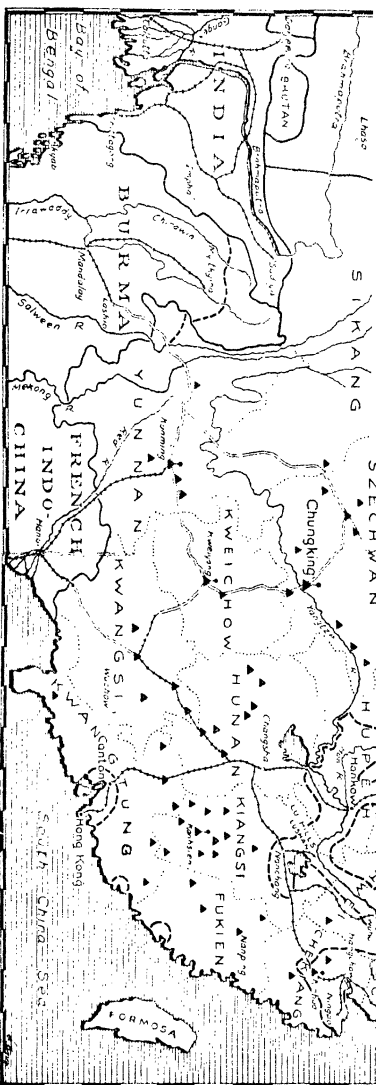
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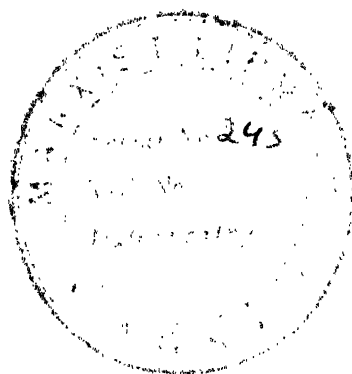
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I SEE A NEW CHINA



# I SEE A NEW CHINA

by

GEORGE HOGG

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TO MY AUNT  
'MURIEL LESTER  
WHO BROUGHT ME TO CHINA

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## INTRODUCTION

WE FACE A new world. The hands and minds that have worked on destruction will have to be turned to work for better living and a reconstructed new age. Many will find the change-over difficult. But mankind everywhere will demand a new deal. There will have to be new leaders who will lead in a new way—whose minds will be clear, and whose quiet determination has been forged hard.

They will not stand, decked with medals, in front of acclaiming thousands. Their names may never be known outside their circle of work associates. But they will be the salt of the new era that we are now preparing to enter. There must be many such men working in our present world of horror, preparing themselves and others for the work that lies ahead.

George Hogg is a man with an unusual background. Brought up in a strongly anti-militarist family—he is the nephew of that militant pacifist, Muriel Lester—his early education was in a “crank” international school in Switzerland, and was carried on, through orthodox English public-school lines, to Oxford. On graduating in 1937 he caught a boat for America, hitch-hiked through most parts of the States, and landed in Shanghai early in 1938. It was not long before he had made his way to the rugged terrain of the North-west, where he has stayed ever since.

I first met him in Hankow, where he was staying in the American Episcopal Mission with Bishop Roots. Later, as United Press correspondent, he was one of the first to come to our earliest Chinese Industrial Co-operatives office in the New Life Movement building, for a story on the co-ops. Those were busy days, filled with all the enthusiasm of China's first year's struggle of resistance. When, in October 1938, the Japanese got close to Hankow, I went west to Shensi, and he, after waiting for the fall of the city, went east in a Jap plane to Shanghai. He remained in my mind as a happy, broad-shouldered young giant in shirt, shorts and straw sandals, with the bearing of a forward in a Rugby football pack.

Then for a year I forgot him, until a letter arrived from the North-west H.Q. of C.I.C. in Paochi. He had travelled from Shanghai through Japan, Korea and Manchuria into North China, and finally slipped out of Peiping to join the guerrillas.

Delayed for months by typhus, floods, and one of the first large-scale Japanese "cleaning-up campaigns" against the guerillas, he had come down on foot across the lines into Free China to work as English secretary to Lu Kuang-mien, director of the work promoting industrial co-operatives in the rear of the lines.

Lu is a man who can use men, and valued enthusiasm. Through him, George had the chance to learn much. He wrote what he saw and lived through of the human struggles entailed in a young co-operative movement, and helped maintain active international interest in better living for the Chinese people. He pushed for the under-dog always. . . . He could have joined the gang of correspondents that sit and stew in international capitals, and so have had much of the comforts and much more of the excitement of life. But he kept to the field—learned to speak Chinese excellently without an accent; learned all the Chinese songs he could find, and became much in demand at co-operative gatherings in consequence, started to inspect co-operatives throughout the North-west, and after a year or so learned how to make a report that contained a good deal of meat; fell in love with most of the pretty girls, but never let that keep him from his work.

His big chance came when a technical school for co-operative apprentices was started. The need for junior technicians in Indusco had long been felt—youths who would stand in between the old-fashioned conservative peasant and the engineer, who would be able to live in rural conditions, but who would have a knowledge of cause and effect with regard to the tools and machinery they used, the organization they worked in, and the forces which surrounded them. As a schoolmaster he became an immediate success. He was able to hold together a group of Chinese and foreign fellow-teachers, and to inspire the boys with a vision of what they could do in Indusco. He will leave his print on those boys, and is already a part of many of them. He is one of those Westerners who have brought to China a real contribution, and made some amends for the sins of those who have come to this country to take away livelihood—not bring it. Through his being and working, many blades of grass will grow in places where none grew before.

The story that is told unconsciously here is the progress of a man in understanding the very complex situation that confronts all those who work on basic things for the new world, where the old world has not yet loosened its hold.

REWI ALLEY.

*Shensi,*

*September, 1943.*

## FOREWORD

**P**ARTLY BECAUSE MANY of the places concerned are mountain tracts and tiny hamlets, and partly because it would be bad war-time etiquette to mention the hide-outs of one's hosts, this book is short on place names. A broad outline of my travels may, however, be helpful:

From Peiping—down the Japanese-held Pinghan Railway—to Paoting-fu; and thence branching out into the free countryside. Over the plains of central Hopei Province; and across the railway again to the guerilla Government and army headquarters of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Region. Then south—across the Chengtai Railway at Niantzekwan—and the Shansi-Hopei border for a roundabout with the guerillas in south-eastern Shansi and a stay at Chu Teh's headquarters; farther south to the Yellow River, at Yuanchu, and across the river to the Lunghai Railway, which carried me westwards to Sian. From Sian to Paochi, birthplace of the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives. From Paochi, a series of excursions to the co-operative centres in the North-west, up the Yellow River to the loess cliffs and camel-worn trade routes of Lanchow. Down the Han River to the cotton-fields and rice-paddies of Hupeh; and north again, across the Yellow River at Loyang, to the industrial guerillas working in the T'ai Hang Mountains.

North-west China, which is the central setting for the whole book, is known as "The cradle of Chinese civilization". It is known as a historic scene of racial and political struggle; as a vast economic hinterland only recently being opened up as Japan drives Chinese initiative out of the coastal cities; as a military base of vital strategic importance, in which guerillas and young students are teaching the people to live new lives of resistance, as a place where modern social influences are trying to establish themselves under conditions much the same as existed for tens of centuries before China ever admitted Western civilization. For all these reasons, the North-west is an ideal place from which to watch New China taking shape. Here the nation's stirring is at its lustiest. Here is seen at its best the Chinese people's amazing adaptability.

What I wanted was to live among the people themselves, to see what the war was doing to their daily lives, to find what new

forms of society were developing under guerilla government; and what new industrial revolution was taking place in the hidden villages. How were the students, professors and business-men, I wondered, getting along with the farmers, and how were the peasant craftsmen faring side by side with skilled workers from Shanghai and Hankow? What actually *happened* to the refugees once they got beyond sight of the city walls? How were the Army's famous "little devils" growing up, and how were the Japanese prisoners making out with the people whose homes and women they had once ravaged? What sort of songs did the people sing and what sort of plays made a hit with them under the circumstances? How long could they stand it, and could the countryside really hope to conquer the cities?

In the next few years the world is going to change faster than it has ever changed before, and we who live in it must learn above all to be versatile. Personal experience of reconstruction within war has already given a kind of steel-cored mobility to millions of individualistic young Chinese. Fanatical self-surrender has given something of the same vigorous buoyancy to millions of fascist youth in Germany and Japan, and it is these latter millions that seem likely to increase until the democratic peoples find some way of co-ordinating and inspiring their own good intentions. Is it not likely that the Chinese, meeting modern catastrophe with the wisdom of their forty centuries, have discovered much that will help us to remake the world for democracy?

GEORGE A. HOGG.

*Paochi,*  
*Shensi.*

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## NOTE

All money mentioned in this book is in Chinese currency, unless otherwise stated. The foreign exchange value fluctuates greatly from time to time, but is usually 20 to 1.

## CHAPTER I

### NORTHERN BASE

As I rolled up in my quilt on the warm *k'ang* of the inn, while jaunty muleteers supped loudly off millet soup and a crowd of village children swarmed round the doorway to gape at the foreigner in bed, it seemed strange that only a few hours before I had still been in the Peiping world of electric buttons, soft sheets and spring beds. "Is this enjoyable, or is it just one of those things that are going to be nice to look back on?" I wondered, pulling the quilt up over my ears to shut out the mule's good-night bray.

I awoke shivering and with a splitting headache, through which the mule's reveille went like a Molotov bread-basket. Kathleen Hall, a New Zealand nurse on her way from Peiping to her mission hospital in western Hopei, immediately took me in charge, swathed me in blankets and tucked me back into a cart. I remember her scampering like a rabbit over the fields all day to find the best roads, while I sat churlishly in my blankets. Later, when the mountains became too steep for the cart, I remember an almost insurmountable problem of how to keep my balance on top of a donkey's pack-saddle piled with bedding. Then a clean whitewashed gateway and someone saying "*Taola!*"—"Arrived!"—and the next thing was three weeks later, lying on a comfortably rustling straw mattress and looking out through the window at a big elm tree. The kindly influence of domestic lice put to work in my system a month previously had triumphed over the wild typhus-carrier of the species. My case of typhus fever was mending.

Old men on doors, babies and children in their mothers' arms, ashen-faced young soldiers on crutches, waited patiently all day in front of the consulting-room. Often in the night there would be a call at the door, and the nurse would take her hurricane lamp and her dog to hurry over the mountains, returning at dawn to make ready for another long day's work. The people seemed to trust her as a friend; but not all of them trusted her medicines, so it often happened that she was called in only after all other methods had failed. After the local midwife had done her best with dirty fingers, rusty hooks and scissors, after the local physician

had tried pummelling, blood-letting and opium, after the family had wasted long hours and precious coppers in the temple, the nurse would be sent for at some midnight zero hour, and this would be made the test of her skill and of her faith.

As I lay on my bed or sat around my room, the old and the new sounds of the village came floating in the window. Just around dawn there was the whistle setting the pace for the local Self-Defence Corps marching to drill, and sometimes the reveille of regular soldiers who were quartered across the stream. The chirping of magpies and sparrows took up the next hours until the village was fully awake, and then throughout the day came the full-throated cry of the itinerant food-sellers, the tricky tapping of the peddler's conch, and the touring tinsmith's whinnying gong. At about five o'clock the school children came out onto the village threshing-floor to practise their songs and drill, and from that time on until ten at night there were constant whistlings, muffled tramping of many cloth shoes running past in the dust, slogans shouted hoarsely from men's throats, and the sing-song of modern China as women and girls went out to night school.

One day during my convalescence I walked among the "crocodiles" of all the people's organizations, up the sandy river-bed to their meeting-place. First went the Self-Defence Corps, which is the guerilla Government's organization specially for mobilizing civilian war work in co-operation with the fighters. Behind it came the Farmers', the Workers', the Women's and the Young Men's Associations, which together form a democratic system of their own, having direct access to the Government authorities at all stages up to the Central Government of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Region. Pink and green paper pennants inscribed with slogans fluttered everywhere from the ranks. Here and there the Men of the Month could be seen proudly bearing banners inscribed with lucky red airplanes, while the blushing boobies tried to hide white flags flaunting yellow turtles.

At one end of the big dusty space was a raised stage, surrounded on three sides with matting. Right underneath it sat the members of the Children's Corps. An infantile conductor led them in song, rhythmically and with complete abandon. Behind them the women, then the wide, deep rows of men armed with red-tasselled broadswords and home-made pikes; and at the back the soldiers.

"The object of this meeting", the local *hsien* magistrate led off, "is to explain what the Japanese mean when they say they want



peace, and what answer has been given them by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek." Heads were bent forward, mouths wide open, brows furrowed. "Japan's peace is not peace between equals, but peace in which we are the slaves and Japan is our master." When he had finished, someone stepped forward to call the slogans, and each one was taken up with a roar and a forest of raised fists by the crowd.

The people of the "Occupied" North seemed in many ways more patriotic than those of the free South-west. Wherever I went, at this time, there were big wall pictures of Chiang Kai-shek. Meetings in his support, such as the one I attended, were being held in every district, and his proclamations were publicized in printed and spoken form. I saw statements and programmes issued from Chungking made up into pamphlets printed on guerilla presses and taught to the soldiers' and people's organizations.

Soon after the meeting I went to call on the young *hsien* magistrate, who turned out to be a university graduate from Tientsin. He had just returned from one of the regular bi-monthly meetings with magistrates of the six neighbouring *hsien*, and told me of the plans that had been discussed for the establishment of industrial co-operatives over the countryside of the Border Region. "They will improve the people's livelihood, make use of latent resources, replace our lost city industries, cut out the need to buy Japanese goods, and ultimately lay the foundations for victorious peace-time reconstruction," he quoted me happily from his pamphlet. I left him poring over another pamphlet, fished out of my baggage, which told of the progress that Chinese Industrial Co-operatives ("Indusco") had made south of the Yellow River. The interest and enthusiasm of a magistrate in this obscure little mountain *hsien* behind the Japanese lines over a plan first mooted in Shanghai and afterwards put into action from Hankow and Chungking, seemed like proof, then, of China's unity. It remained proof of basic unity between the people of China, even as the country settled down into two increasingly differentiated halves—for Indusco went on developing independently on both sides of the internal front.

## II

One day a group of horsemen clattered through our village and pulled up at the hospital. "We've come for the foreigner,"

they explained, producing an invitation from General Nieh to visit him farther west. A few hours later we had left our horses and were climbing past a pair of sentries corseted in hand grenades to Nieh's H.Q. in a temple.

General Nieh Jung-chen is Commander-in-Chief for all the guerilla forces in the Border Region of Shansi-Chahar-Hopei. After completing his military training as a young man in Paris, he had returned to take up a position as instructor in Chiang Kai-shek's Whampoa Military Academy, and later, at the time of the Kuomintang-Communist split, had joined the First Red Army of Lin P'iao, making the Long March with it from Kiangsi to Shensi. In 1937 it was he, together with the Border Region's chairman, Sung Saowen, who first conceived the idea of setting up an organized government for the countryside after the Japanese had advanced along the railways and the old officials had fled. "This Border Region is only carrying on until it can be linked with the rear and sink its identity into that of Free China," said General Nieh to me, later.

I stayed a week in his headquarters, spending six or seven hours each day talking with the army and Government men (there was little to distinguish them from each other) who dropped in to see Nieh. Then we packed up and set off on horseback up a winding grey valley of sand, through which the water trickled over a string of boat-shaped gardens. Along the lower slopes on either side cherry and pear trees were in bloom. Brown hills lay behind, and purple razor-edge peaks stood up like stage scenery in the distance. This was the second day of my life on horseback.

As we sat round at supper that night the conversation turned on the Japanese national characteristics. "They are very polite about entering each other's houses," remarked a returned graduate from Tokyo Imperial University. "For a long time after the first railways were built, each train pulling out of the station left many pairs of wooden *geta* neatly lined along the edge of the platform!"

Next day we saw one of the pieces of hooliganism that might have been expected to blot out such memories. A huge Buddhist temple had been reduced to rubble by gunfire at blank-range, and for miles up and down the valley the people's homes stood charred and roofless; their owners were poking among the wreckage for remnants or camping out on the hillsides. Such was Japan's "lesson" for the guerillas and the people who helped them. For if the people had to rebuild their houses they could grow no crops,

and if they could grow no crops how could they and the guerillas remain? Then *Dai Nippon* could rule as sole monarch of a black and blistered countryside, inheritor of more hatred than Cromwell and the English kings ever sowed in Ireland.

In a village near Fuping, Chairman Sung Sao-wen and some other Government men were waiting for Nieh to hold a joint conference on *Chuin-min ho iso*—"Army-people co-operation".

"In the actual business of collecting grain, cloth and manpower for the army," explained Chairman Sung, "the people have a direct say and right of appeal through the Government. The army is not allowed to deal with them directly except when unavoidable, as with finding quarters for troops on the march. In these cases a committee of specially trained soldiers in each unit takes over full responsibility. Of course this system isn't always water-tight, but at least we can say that there is good co-operation between Government and army. We want to meet their needs as efficiently as possible, and they want to help us do it with the least possible friction and the least burden on the people." One morning while we were at breakfast a young man came in to say good-bye to Chairman Sung. He seemed in high spirits, and outside the door we could see a group of young men and women with packs on their backs ready for a hike—they were an investigation committee elected from the army, Government and various people's organizations to report on army-civilian relations in this part of the Border Region.

"The Japanese have captured one of our hot springs," remarked General Nieh one evening, "but we still have two left"—so off we went on horseback to a hot bath. Into the big stone pool the water founted, and leading dignitaries—Chairman Sung, the Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, General Nieh and others—besported themselves nudely in two feet of water or sat about on convenient blocks of stone. Through clouds of steam we discussed the post-war tourist trade.

"Horses, hot springs and mountain beauty spots, all within easy reach of Peiping when we get a few motor roads through!" The Commissioner for Commerce and Industry was enthusiastic in his plans for a grand hotel on this spot, with special suites for Captain (now Colonel) Evans Carlson and Associated Press correspondent Haldore Hanson, who were the two earliest visitors to the Region.

After the conference and before leaving for the Government at Fuping, we attended a meeting of the people's convention—a

joint body formed from all the people's organizations. In the audience stood young students in straw sandals taking notes to pass on to their night-school classes, blue-clad farmers with their daughters, old women who looked as though they would have liked to stand on tiptoe had their toes not been somewhere tucked under their insteps. There was a pair of lamas with shallow top hats and vacant hollow faces, and a Roman Catholic priest—pasty, well-fed, smooth-skinned, wearing a gold wrist-watch and a black silk gown. Shaven heads and shock heads, widows' peaks, button-topped skull-caps. . . . They were listening now to the voice of a thin, reedy educational leader, and rippling in response to his fist-in-the-palm oratory. Chairman Sung gave a closing speech that repeated the closing phrase of each period before beginning the next, so that even the very young and the very old and the very uninitiated could follow what he was saying.

We set off northwards immediately after the meeting, and before dark found the Government, tucked away in an old temple. Monks and guerillas have been living amicably side by side all through the Border Region, and their relationships here were no exception. While the busy life of the student groups, the delegations, the telephone messages and radiograms went on all round them, and the offices hummed with the job of keeping hundreds of Government units close on the heels of enemy troops, the monks kept up their old peaceful ritual. Three or four times each day they shut themselves into a room filled with gold-leafed gods and percussion instruments, and the sound of their wailing prayers came creeping out from behind the closed doors. One of their little bells struck the same note as my typewriter's, and I could imagine them turning over the pages each time it rang. In the shade of the temple courtyard, or inhabiting the rocks down by the river, bands of students in uniform studied their courses in Government administration and mass education. Whenever freed from office work, Sung and other leaders lectured to groups of them or tutored them individually.

A frequent visitor at the Government headquarters was the young manager of the Border Region Bank, which was founded in March 1938 and quickly absorbed or drove out of circulation all other notes, including the puppet currency of the Japanese, giving this area the first uniform currency it had ever had. This is in direct contrast to the state of affairs in other parts of Shansi, where the notes of a score of different banks, some of which

collapsed years ago, still exchange against each other at varying rates.

In another part of the village was the headquarters of the Women's Association, which at that time, two years after its foundation, had a full-time staff of a thousand working for no pay above food and clothes, and claimed several hundred thousand members.

"The aim of our Association", one of the workers told me, "is to mobilize the women for national salvation and reconstruction, to better their living conditions and get them used to the idea of equal political status. Every day there are two thousand classes for adult women, led by the village school-teachers with our textbooks, besides many other character-recognizing and newspaper-reading groups. In the thirty *hsien* where our work is best established there have already been sixteen women elected as village heads, and 1431 elected to other committees on the village governments."

This girl afterwards gave me her own story.

"When my college friends rushed away from Peiping at the beginning of the war I thought I'd stay on for at least another year, until after I'd graduated. But our student life soon became intolerable. It wasn't so much the jaunty little men in the streets and the way they tried to inflict 'peace' on our city, as the thought of my classmates out there beyond the walls.

"I showed their letters, smuggled in from the hills, to my mother. But she was more afraid of dirt and poverty than she was of the Japanese. To go out and live with rough peasants seemed to her like putting the clock back. 'Wait a little! Wait a little,' she kept telling me, 'and when you have finished your education you can go to join your father in Chungking.' One night I couldn't bear it any longer, and slipped out of the city by ways a friend had shown me."

The intellectual and emotional upheaval that had taken her from the city became something physical. She exchanged city shoes for rope sandals and walked for days over the stony mountains of western Hopei. Once it had seemed to her that lice were as little to be reckoned with and as incalculably horrifying as lions, but here, after an hour's visit on the intimate and irrefusable *k'ang* of the country-women, she was almost sure to be lousy. She chopsticked her millet and beans from the same cans as people she knew were consumptive, and as for the enamel wash-bowl she had brought for her own use to guard against

trachoma, it was immediately hailed as common property, until she abandoned all claims to it after seeing a soldier use it to feed a sick mule.

"The country-women were much stranger to me than the foreign professors at college, and it was a long time before I could make them understand what I was after. Then we got groups competing with each other in making shoes and uniforms for the soldiers. Evening classes became quite popular with the help of the local school-teachers. Leaders grew up from the women themselves, who could carry on meetings and classes with the help of our pamphlets. The best districts formed Women's Self-Defence Corps, drilled themselves twice a week, and began to take over sentry duty, freeing men for work in the fields. Women who had lost face by being unable to bear boy children were taught how to get back their status in the family by bringing in a side-income from some kind of domestic industry.

"Later I was sent to one of the Japanese 'Railway-Loving Villages' on the Peiping-Hankow line. The Japanese at this time were trying out a new policy of 'kindness' with the people, bowing low 'out of respect' to the elders, offering sugar to the children, and buying paper temple-money for the peasants to burn over their dead. I tried secretly to organize small patriotic groups, and show the people what kind of a false peace it was that the Japanese were really offering them. When they burned the paper money I reminded them of the burned homes and slaughtered people at other times in their village, and all the time in other villages through the country. After several months passed like this, the guerillas raided our village to arrest the leading traitors, and I was allowed to come back here with them."

### III

Chairman Sung had suggested an extended tour of the Region. General Nieh had provided a Yenching University graduate from his staff as companion, also four guards and six horses.

We spent the nights at various regimental and battalion headquarters. The higher officers were old Red Army men, but the ordinary soldiers and lower officers had all been peasants at the time of the Lukouchiao Incident in 1937. I used to talk to them in the evenings as they squatted round on the hillsides above the villages. "We're learning all the time now," they agreed. "We have classes in national affairs and character-reading every day."

Often I found them helping the peasants—"to keep our hands in", as one of them explained.

On the table at our halting place one evening were one large tin of coffee, two tins of milk, six cigars, two boxes of wrapped candy, two pounds of cubed sugar, six oranges and some cigarettes, all of which unheard-of luxuries had been bought with enemy currency in a near-by occupied city. This was the local commander's idea of hospitality. Yet in at least one district through which I had passed the army staff's meagre allowance of three dollars had not been paid for several months, and an order had just gone out that all ranks, from "little devil" to Commander-in-Chief, should have their pay cut to one dollar a month, as the Central Government had not sent pay for the 8th Route soldiers.

As companions along part of the way I had the twenty-five singers, actors, ex-movie stars and factory workers of the Northwest Front Service Group formed by authoress Ting Ling, from graduates of the Lu Hsün Arts School in Yen-an, for propaganda work with the country people. Blooded in the first bitter campaigns of Shansi, this group had returned to Yen-an for a refresher course before crossing the Yellow River again in November 1938, since when it had been working continuously in the Border Region. Snatches of song echoed back and forth along the line as we filed round the mountain-sides, but at each village there was a word from the front, and we passed through as orderly and silent as an army unit. "We get our food, uniforms, and two dollars a month," one of the girls told me. "That's plenty. All we need to buy is peanuts to munch along the road."

After arriving at the village which they had chosen for the day's performance we went straight to a farmhouse and lit fires in the courtyard to cook eggless pancakes and vegetables. Soon two columns of infants, tousled, smooth-shaven or with topknots wrapped in pink wool, marched in to welcome us. They sang militantly to the anxious beat of their scholarly old school-master, and filed out again.

Having fixed up their own stage in readiness on the village market-place, the group sat about the farm courtyard for a discussion on dramatic technique. Since the war most of these student troubadour groups had been trying to fit new ideas into the form of the old popular historical plays, with varying degrees of success.

"It is absurd", said one speaker, "to make the Japanese devils dance intricately with red-tasselled spears and broad swords;

equally absurd, from the tradition-loving peasants' point of view, to create new symbols for tanks and guns. We must stick to simple realism. The traditional dramatic symbols that served their purpose well enough for thousands of years have become out of date in the last ten."

A chicken clucked its way about, piglets snuffled, and a donkey stood licking an unoccupied bit of the grindstone.

It was National Humiliation Day, commemorating China's acceptance of the Twenty-One Demands from Japan, and a big mass meeting had been arranged in the village. In the morning a battalion of soldiers had been taken away to deal with an emergency on the front, and gunfire was growing louder as the remaining troops, the people's Self-Defence Corps, the Children's Corps and the other people's groups marched into the meeting-ground.

"The people are laughing!" sang the North-west Front Service Group:—

"They have become brave,  
Standing beyond burned houses,  
Arms around their children, laughing.  
Sometimes going out to meet the enemy,  
Crying out in proud tune:  
'Give us your arms!'"

The village produced its own troupe of "little devils", none of them more than fifteen years old, doing interpretive dances of the kind that were popular in the Chinese Soviet days, in Kiangsi. But instead of dances to express revolt and class war there were Unity Dances, a Resist-Fascism Dance, an Increase-Ploughland Dance, and a number of other unpolitical ones about butterflies, trees shedding leaves, and people playing tennis. Next morning I watched these "little devils" rehearsing a new step on the empty plot of land which they used for practising. They were humming the rhythm to themselves and tripping about with twists and gestures but not a sign of sheepishness. This was work.

Alongside education of the people, education directed towards enemy troops is placed in a position of almost equal importance. Each company must learn one new Japanese song each month, and the best students of Japanese are put through full-time courses. Anti-war songs are sung in Japanese across the lines at night, slogans are shouted in unison while going into battle or written up on walls where the troops are likely to see them, leaflets written by prisoners or by Chinese who have lived for years in



Japan are scattered along the highways where marching troops or truck-drivers will pick them up.

Prisoners, whenever possible, are sent back to their units after a brief period of training. At the headquarters of the Political Department I met one who had been a professional propagandist for the Japanese Army. He spoke very glibly, and it seemed that he would soon be sent back, with Honours; for the workers of the 8th Route Army's Enemy Work Department were treating him like a brother. I learned afterwards that they didn't trust him a yard, but merely thought this kind of treatment best under the circumstances.

A few days after I met him, a letter came from his superior officer in Shihchiachuang, brought to General Nieh by means of a special messenger.

"It is a very abrupt and unusual thing for me to address you these few lines," the letter began. . . .

It is most regrettable that since the outbreak of the war on July 7, 1937, Japan and China, friends of the same race, are suddenly become incompatible enemies. But however long and cruel, this war is only a temporary misunderstanding between our two nations. At its close we shall still be hand in hand struggling for the welfare of the human race, and close friends. . . .

It is quite natural that in war-time many people have to give up their lives, so from this point of view, since Mr. Higashine has sacrificed himself for his country, it would not be seemly for me humbly to beg for his release. But this man is my close friend. If you grant our request I will send you one or two thousand dollars' worth of medical supplies for the wounded and sick of your honourable troops, to express our compliments. In view of your serious lack, these would be very useful.

Please think this over three times.

The education of the 8th Route troops themselves takes place not only while resting or training, but while actually on the march. Educational workers going in front of the troops spread posters out on the rocks beside the path with questions such as "What are the points involved in the United Front?" "What are the duties of a sentry?" "What are the Three Great Orders and the Eight Great Observances?"\* A guerilla force, not having the

\* These deal mostly with soldier-civilian relations.

machine-like discipline of an ordinary army, must rely for morale on the understanding of the principles involved in the war by the men themselves. Seven hours of the soldiers' time each week are allotted to political and social subjects. Each regiment has two full-time educational workers, and each smaller unit has its own director of education elected from among the soldiers themselves.

In every army unit the "National Salvation Room" or the "Resist-Japan Club" is the centre of education and recreation, and the educational programme for each month is first diagrammed on the wall of this room. In the clubs at which I called during those few weeks the following poster was pinned in a prominent position:—

#### A DIAGRAM OF THE THREE PEOPLE'S PRINCIPLES REPUBLIC

1. The new Chinese Republic based on the Three Principles (of Dr. Sun Yat-sen) will not be a capitalist democracy, such as England and America, neither will it be a Soviet Union or a socialist State, but it will be a new kind of democratic republic based on the unity between all classes.

2. The semi-colonial status of China will be changed to that of an independent self-governing nation. But however strong China becomes, she will never herself become an imperialist Power. She will not interfere with other countries, and will treat every country that recognizes her independence as an equal.

3. To realize this, the Kuomintang, Communist and other Resist-Japan parties must co-operate not only during the war, but long afterwards.

#### IV

A telegram came from the Region's southernmost headquarters to say that an escort party would cross the Chengtai Railway within the next few days, so my bedding roll was spread over a mountainous Japanese cart-horse, on top of which I lumbered southwards. That night I dreamed I had just received the tickets for a trip to Switzerland, but was telephoning frantically to the travel agency for express-train coupons. On arriving at H.Q., however, I found a very smart little red pony prepared for me, and thought myself lucky until he deposited me, my typewriter, camera, diary and films, into a turbid stream.

Our party included a hundred students who the year previously had left Yen-an in north Shensi and crossed over to form the new branch of Resist-Japan Academy in western Hopei. As students they had been given food and uniforms plus one dollar (about fifty cents in United States currency) a month to cover soap, toothpaste, underclothes, and school stationery. Now, as graduates, they were being sent to work in the south-eastern Shansi district as lower army officers, administrators or mass educationalists.

"Why did you all leave home and go to Yen-an in the first place?" I frequently asked. Among a variety of answers, ranging from dissatisfaction with lives of comfort to having been driven out by Japanese bombs, the real reason always seemed to have been the search for a place where comradeship and equality in a national cause were placed above everything else. It was as simple as that.

Just as we were ready to set off southwards across the railway, the Japanese launched a new attack across our path, and we were told to pack up and march north again. The gunfire continued all next morning, and we moved farther into the mountains, arriving at a tiny hamlet just as the peasant families were squatting round on their haunches to suck their evening noodles. From the roof-tops we could see Japanese planes dive-bombing over the village that we had just left.

Our house—that of a well-to-do peasant by local standards—had four rooms, a stable and a barn. Furniture totalled three low tables which could be put up on the *k'ang* or squatted round in the courtyard, an odd stool or two, and one chair for the whole household. In the barn were piles of mud bricks, some raffia rope, a few planks of wood, a plough, and a four-foot jar of pickled poplar leaves; corn-cobs, onions and wooden pack-saddles hung from the rafters, above which were stored two coffins, one carved and lacquered, the other plain. On the first day the family lived off millet and thick lumps of boiled grey dough; on the second, which was some kind of feast day, it waxed merry off bean-shoots and kaoliang wine.

The entire hamlet was made up of five similar mud-brick houses, and several pigsties, with small cubicles mounted on stilts over them. I once read in a missionary travel book that in northern China villages only pigs live in two-storied houses. As a matter of fact the box-like cubicles mounted over each sty are not for the pigs. They are public latrines, put up at the owners'

expense for the purpose of feeding his pigs, and enter into sharp competition with one another.

Our "little devils" and a professional troubadour group of other "little devils", which we met along the way, were so happy to be out on the march again that they hiked up the cliffs and gave a recital to the villages dotted along the valley below. Under different conditions such a retreat as ours would have been ignominious, but here we all knew that retreat was part of the means to re-attack, and kept ourselves busy all day with classes, talks, discussion groups, climbing, cleanliness campaigns and mass laundering in the river. The situation may at some moments have appeared dour, and the land prolific in nothing save rock and flies. Before setting out for the next village in these parts it is customary to inquire "Has it water?" If so, the traveller may reasonably expect at least some flower petals, vegetable marrow (squash) and noodles to eat; but if not, it is surprising what money won't buy. In this case the only thing to do is to hold a sing-song with the "little devils", after which everything becomes magically edible.

One night I was awakened very late on my roof by shouts of "Self-Defence Corps out to carry stretchers!" and peals on the big temple gong. In the morning a friendly old man in our nether household told me that over a thousand men had gone from the villages in the neighbourhood. The organization of the people even in the tiniest mountain hamlets is one necessary part of guerilla struggle. The telephone system which straddles the countryside on rickety props is another. The reorganized post office, with "Airmail" letters marked by a chicken feather stuck under the flap and sped from hand to hand by night and day, is a third.

It was a week before the Japanese retreated. After a twenty-four-hour march we dropped down from the mountains by night and came suddenly to the banks of a river, beyond which lay the railway embankment. The city of Niantzekwan could be seen not far away in the moonlight, and a Japanese flag floating from the top of a tall mast in a "Railway-Loving Village" just in front of us acted as a signal to the sentries on the city wall that all was well. The men of the village were out to meet us with gifts of Japanese sugar. After swift consultation they led us across the rails and silently off into the mountains on the far side. Everything was as quiet as church before the minister appears in the pulpit; frogs and crickets played vibrant chords, and once a mule

brayed from our column in front, as though the organist had suddenly expired across the keys. The sound was cut abruptly by the lashing of a whip and the muffled cursing of soldiers. Looking back, I could see the Japanese flag still floating palely in the moonlight.

We had crossed, and were once more melting into the countryside.

## CHAPTER II

### JOURNEY TO SIAN

THE SUMMER RAINS made clean streaks down the backs of the children and over their bellies, swollen with the eating of husks and tree bark. The peasants sat grinning happily in their doorways. The officers sat in the local mess—a large barn decorated with pictures of Mao Tseh-tung, Chu Teh, Karl Marx and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek—took time off to shave their heads, play chess, drink tea, spit on the floor, and read pamphlets to each other in loud voices. The soldiers placed bowls of uniforms outside to soak. At intervals, someone would remark hopefully, "It'll be cooler after the rain."

In the second week a gale arose, the river washed right up into the village; a family of camels tethered outside screeched thinly as the water rose up to their knees, and our soldiers shouted to each other as they packed everything in preparation for flight by the light of fluttering candles. But next day the weather cleared. "Seventy years since the water rose that high!" remarked the oldest inhabitant from his doorway. We could see the river, still quite close, coursing by like a run-away moving-staircase, and hear the grinding of great rocks beneath the water as the current trundled them along.

By the time we could wade across, Chu Teh's headquarters had moved away—nobody quite knew where—and we had to set out westwards and cross another Japanese motor road. The people here were less organized, there were fewer telephones and greater uncertainty as to which villages the enemy actually occupied. Guideless, we trudged through fields of mud in the dark, dropped quickly over the road, crossed a wide river, regained the foothills on the farther side, and found a village to sleep in as it was getting light.

An hour later we were awakened by rifle-shots. "It's probably only just some traitors," said a guard as we hurried away from the village. "They are given rifles instead of pay, and collect their own food. They fire like that to frighten the people away, and then go in for chickens and pigs." Some villagers came up who confirmed this explanation, and we all joined in pouring unmentionable epithets on the mothers of traitors.

After a few days we passed into territory controlled by the *Shansi Hsi Meng Hwei*—"Sacrifice Union".

When, in the years before the war, the Japanese had invaded Suiyuan to the north and the Red Army had marched to Shensi on the west, Yen Hsi-shan, governor in Shansi, felt himself threatened by two forces against which he had the wit to see that his old feudal army, for all its personal loyalty to himself, would be quite unable to stand. So, for the first time, opportunity was given the young and progressive forces to organize themselves when, on September 18, 1936 (fifth anniversary of the Mukden Incident), the Sacrifice Union was founded on a platform of resistance to Japan through popular mobilization. Its immediate aims were stated: To make a drive for one million members, to put 3000 people under arms, and to promote a people's boycott movement against Japanese goods. Though nominally himself at the head of the Union, Yen Hsi-shan at first allowed it no real power, but held it for an emergency while using it as a means to foist his progressives off with slogan-shouting. The peasants were preserved from the growth of "Red" opinions by an equally theoretical "Share-the-Common-Land-of-the-Village Society". "The people unorganized are an empty vessel, but the people organized are the seeds of trouble," said Yen to a meeting of leaders at this time.

At the outbreak of war in 1937, the swift collapse of his armies and his Government bureaucracy, and the growing activity of 8th Route and Central Government forces on the fringes of his territory, convinced Yen at last that his only hope for preserving the balance of power lay in pushing forward the new Shensi men. "Arm the people!" became one of his official slogans. The Sacrifice Union was allowed to form its own army, called the "Dare-to-Die Corps", under Po Yi-o, with 15,000 men in five brigades. More than half the part of Shansi that remained under Yen's control was governed by magistrates and super-magistrates belonging to the Sacrifice Union, while Chairman Sung Sao-wen of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Region was also a Sacrifice Union man and a former super-magistrate of Yen's.

Because its officers lived poorly, because they cut their salaries and other expenses so that five brigades could be supported on the money given for three, because they held meetings with the soldiers and fraternized with the peasants, the Dare-to-Die Corps had quickly been dubbed "the 7½ Route Army" by its enemies, and it was therefore in reply to charges of Communism that Jung

Wu-shen, who is one of the Sacrifice Union's Big Five, spoke to me in the temple near Kaop'ing which sheltered his Political Department at this time. "In North China today the mass movement is growing and strong, but that does not mean North China is Communist," he said. "The people are being mobilized for resistance and reconstruction, and not strictly for political purposes."

In the three months previous to my visit, 2000 hand-grenades had been distributed to the peasants of this district, and there had already been more than a dozen cases in which Japanese parties on the forage for food or women had been captured by the villagers themselves. In almost every village we passed men in peasant clothing, with grenades sticking out debonairly from belts or pockets, who talked usefully about road conditions and enemy movements.

People-army relations in this district were safeguarded by a special staff training school with 500 students. One section was devoted entirely to mass education; another, led by a returned student from Tokyo, to propaganda among enemy forces; a third was for training lower army officers. The students lived with the peasants, helped them repair the roads and bring in the crops, made their own clothes, and organized themselves into guerilla units for action as soon as the Japanese approached the district.

In an adjoining village I was taken to see the school for "little devils", 400 of whom had been collected from the Dare-to-Die Corps fighting forces, to be given concentrated education for the first time. Their dormitory lofts were scrupulously neat, with slogan posters and "TWELVE SUGGESTIONS FOR A BETTER SCHOOL" pinned on the walls. The boys themselves were at class outdoors, sitting on rows of flat stones arranged facing the wall of the building, which served for a blackboard. One of the performers at the show they put on for us in the afternoon was a very weedy little boy of ten years. At the age of eight his parents had sold him to a traitor for seven dollars, and he had been used to carry messages until some soldiers discovered him and brought him in for a different kind of education.

After the show I sat down with the brigade staff and the teachers to a dinner at which we shared a tin of pork and baked beans sent down from the Generalissimo's headquarters in Chungking.

"There isn't very much," my neighbour apologized as I tried to propel a bean to my mouth with chopsticks, "and the pork



seems all to have dissolved en route. But it's a good reminder that we aren't being forgotten in Chungking."

The Dare-to-Dies had received information that Japanese prisoners returned to their units were killed immediately by their own officers, so that there was no attempt to send prisoners back any longer. When I first arrived at the prison loft there was nobody at home. A few minutes later they appeared up the ladder, looking very refreshed after a swim in the river, and each with a capful of apples in his hand. The "jailer" himself was an ex-captive Japanese, now a Sacrifice Union member. Of the two prisoners recently taken from a marauding party by the villagers, Nishimura had been a Tokyo Industrial High School student until coming to China a year before, and Kawai a grocer in Kyoto. Nishimura's head was still bandaged where a farmer had struck it with a pole.

We had a very diplomatic talk through interpreters, sitting round Japanese-fashion on a mat with our shoes off.

I: "I would like to ask Mr. Kawai what the war aims of the Japanese Army are in China."

KAWAI: "There are many people in Japan, as there must also be in England and America, who do not understand the policy of their Government. You, who are better educated than I, must understand the situation better. I regret that I have not the learning to answer your question."

I: "Is the Japanese Army now fighting the Chinese people as a whole or only part of them?"

KAWAI: "We have been told that the people are being forced to fight by the war lords in Chungking and the Communists."

I: "Do you know that England and America are helping China? Why do you think that these countries would want to help war lords, much less Communists?"

NISHIMURA: "England and America gain much profit from China."

I: "But it is the peoples of these countries even more than their business-men who want to help China."

NISHIMURA: "I'm afraid that is due to the policy of their Governments, which simply influences the people to take their own view."

We went off then to show ourselves to a mass meeting. Nishimura made a speech on the subject of a united front against

fascism. From the platform I could see how his hands quivered, clasped behind him, but his bandaged head was held well back as he faced the crowd of curious peasants who two weeks before had almost killed him. Kawai sang a squeaky song which everybody kindly encored.

Walking home again with the prisoners, and observing the friendliness of the people all around them, brought a question to my mind: Where and what is the "Japanese Devil"?

Like a wolf or a tiger he robs and he rapes,  
Out of ten men he leaves but one. . . .

runs a popular song-dialogue between a war refugee from Manchuria and a hinterland peasant.

"What kind of things does he rob?"  
"Horses, mules, girls, he takes them all."  
"From what kind of homes does he like his girls?"  
"Rich and poor, young and old, he doesn't care."

The song of the Shansi Redspears has spread up into Hopei and to the borders of Mongolia:—

Peasant man, peasant man,  
D'you want to be a horse or an ox?  
D'you want to be a New Order cow?  
Take up your red-tasselled spear,  
Drive out the little East Sea Devil!  
East Sea Devil—a cross-hearted  
King of all devils,  
Dreaming to destroy China.

The "Devil" of the Resist-Japan theatre differs from that of the songs because technical difficulties of representation suggested an emphasis on the more pathetic and frustrated aspects of his nature. Exquisitely dressed in genuine Japanese officer's great-coat, cap, sword, pistol and shiny leather trappings, enormously puffed up and blimpish, he is sadly bamboozled into giving the password to the heroine, whom he supposes himself to have charmed by his personage, but who is actually a guerilla fighter's sister. Or he bestows a wealth of sweets on little boys and girls, only to find that they are loyal members of the Children's Corps who throw pepper in his eyes at the critical moment.

In actual life and conversation the emphasis shifts again. The maidens of the Women's Self-Defence Corps may chorus "Kill! kill! kill!" as they lunge their weapons at imaginary Japanese; the heroine of the entire Women's Association may be the old granny who first suggested dropping captured devils down the

well as a good way to save bullets; the village schools may be decorated with gory scenes of battle and atrocity, and the children may scream songs of hate and slaughter. . . . But here now was this group of Chinese peasants playing amicably with two Japanese prisoners taken in the act of marauding their homes.

"Are they devils?" I asked one of the students in charge.

"No, not now," he smiled. "Once they're with us they aren't devils any more."

"Are they devils?" I asked one of the old men who had brought them a present of pears and persimmons.

"Not now," he replied. "A devil is an imperialist."

"Am I a devil?" I asked, just to make sure.

"Nowadays there is only one real devil in China," said the wise old man. "You are our international friend."

So that was it! A devil is an imperialist rampant.

General Hou, a fellow student of Nieh Jung-chen's in Paris and a tough old Long Marcher, anxiously nursed his sick baby and sang the "Internationale" in unrecognizable French, while his homely post-Parisian wife looked proudly down from the loft. The headquarters of Chu Teh had been discovered somewhere to the east again.

"There'll only be one more Japanese line to cross. You should be there in four days," said Hou.

This line, running right across south-eastern Shansi from the Tao-Ching Railway to the Tungpu, is at once a motor road by which the Japanese seek to drain the countryside of its raw materials and a blockade line separating the industrial coal and iron districts in the south from the grain-producing districts farther north. The road is closely garrisoned, and hedged on either side by fortified villages. Beyond the villages is a wide belt of scorched territory in which neither people nor guerillas can live.

We stopped late one evening on the edge of this belt to squat round in the dusk for a pep-talk explaining a complicated system of pass-words in case of trouble, then walked on, stubbing our feet in stony river-beds, shuffling silently through gutted villages, filing swiftly along narrow paths cut out of sheer cliffsides. Once every half-hour we were allowed a breathing spell for the pack-animals to catch up.

"Tell the mule-man he mustn't light his pipe!" the whispered command was passed down the line. "Don't cough!" And repeatedly, "Tell the animals not to make so much noise!" Each time this order came back, the man with the horse behind me

swore bitterly, "How can they help it if they've got hoofs!" He and his horse were the two most experienced members of the party: one had been a Red Guerilla in the Shansi Civil War days, and the other was an old Long-Marcher from Kiángsi.

In front ran a squad of soldiers; behind them forty students, an engineer, the Red Guerilla and his Long-Marching horse, the non-smoking mule-man and his mule with my typewriter and bedding. The whole thing constituted a perambulating concertina that in turn strung itself out or dashed in on itself from the rear. The old horse took it all like a circus, scrambling up steep banks, spanking over the open stretches, or pulling up dead at a split second's notice, and all without so much as a snort. But my mule was quite unable to stand the pace; or maybe its master stopped for a pull of 'baccy.

"Where's the mule?" The officer counted us over as we scuttled down the Japanese highway for fifty yards before striking out into country on the far side. Nobody knew. It was more than just a question of my things—if the mule blundered into a Japanese sentry post a party might be sent out to investigate and posts ahead of us would be informed. A squad was sent back to find the straggler and returned half an hour later with not only the mule, but a roll of Japanese telephone wire.

Two days later, with Chu Teh, Commander-in-Chief of the 8th Route Army, I was at a meeting to celebrate the anniversary day of the Mukden Incident. As we sat listening to the speeches he held my hand closely for three hours, much as a father holds the hand of his smallest son, so that I was hard put to it to find a way of blowing my nose. His eyes turned upwards into crinkles at the corners, and without his speaking I felt somehow that he was glad to see me.

The day had been set for the opening of a kind of house-party to which the south-eastern Shansi headquarters of the 8th Route Army periodically invited all the names on the top half of the Provincial Government's tax assessment list, scholars and school-teachers. There were big dinners, "little devils" to bustle about with tea-kettles and messages, and tables set for the elite under a big awning over the temple courtyard. Shrewd-eyed, lantern-jawed Peng Teh-huai, Chu Teh's second in command, was addressing the meeting. "There are two sets of 'Three People's Principles' in China today," he said. "One is that of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and our Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek—Nationalism, Democracy and People's Livelihood. The other is that of Wang

Ching-wei and like-minded traitors—anti-Communist, anti-United Front, and pro-National Slavery.”

Looking on at this meeting of the extremes—“Reds” and landlords—I was reminded of a captured Japanese document that I had seen a few weeks before, giving the speech of the Commander of the Tenth Division to his officers on army-people relations:—

The economic might of our Empire has been flouted by China and by the world. The success or failure of the war is, in the last resort, more or less determined by economic factors, and the main policy of our Government is on the one hand to control domestic economy in the homeland and on the other to obtain the resources of the occupied areas. Thus, alongside the war of military force we must be engaged in a war of economics and of thought.

. . . The Chinese Communists’ policy is an excellent example. They systematically build up the mass movements. They arm the people and win their confidence. We must do the same. We must win the hearts of the people. . . .

I was taken out afterwards to attend the trial of a merchant’s son who was said to have been taking military information to the Japanese.

Having heard the witnesses from the local Self-Defence Corps and the prisoner’s own defence, the judge turned to the jury. No placid pew-sitting jury this, but an awakening peasant people educated to regard traitors as worse than the Japanese themselves.

“We demand that the traitor be shot!” came several voices at once. The verdict, given in view of the prisoner’s youth, was ten years.

That evening the village branch of the Women’s Association met to decide what should be done to free one of its members from her engagement in marriage to the traitor. Chu Teh’s secretary, a Yenching girl whom he had accused of being too academic and had sent out to work with the local village women, told me what happened. The traitor’s family, unwilling to lose a good daughter-in-law on top of its son, was pressing its right to enforce the contract signed years before between the two families. Conventional village elders had supported them. But the public opinion of the younger women, mobilized through their association, was strong enough to save this girl from a parallel sentence

of ten years without husband or honour, and the contract was cancelled.

## II

Two apple-checked, straw-haired, curry-chinned fellow-countrymen of mine—Ralph Lapwood and Michael Lindsay, professors at Yenching University—turned up at Chu Teh's headquarters from Peiping after I had been there a few days. I borrowed their mirror and gazed in it with misgivings. Could it be that I didn't have a nice yellow face and black hair? Could that gargoyle be my nose, those two protruding glassy spheres, that revoltingly pink and spotty expanse be my eyes and face? It seemed high time to be getting back to civilization, and we three were already packed up and ready to go when we were told that the enemy had concentrated forces along the blockade line ahead of us, and we would be unable to cross it for some days.

In the village an old man sat on the ground with a pile of yellow-covered books spread in a circle around him. He looked very sage, his beard being of the same hue as his time-worn parchments, but he admitted in a burst of confidence that he was unable to recognize any more than the titles of his books. He persuaded us to buy a kind of soothsaying calendar, and Ralph, our scholar, looked up the day. But the evil things portended for anyone who dared move on this particular date must have applied to the Japanese, for we were told on our return to headquarters that "the Japanese became confused in the dark and spent last night firing across the valley at themselves with heavy casualties on both sides". The road was clear, and we set off southwards on the last stage of our journey to the Yellow River.

As the road stretched out, mental stagnation set in. The greatest handicap to a healthy mind, we found, is unhealthy feet. Our average of twenty-three miles a day may not sound much from an armchair perspective, but as a matter of fact they were painful miles, in the covering of which pointed pebbles, rocky river-beds and the soft soles of our cloth sandals drove everything else but boils, constipation, lice, sleep and distances from our minds. We became more and more incredibly British. We were frigidly polite with each other as we folded up our bedding and put down our early-morning noodles; along the way we remarked unfeelingly on the weather or the view; and in the evenings we loosened up no end, addressed each other as "old

boy", recalled Oxford and Cambridge rags, instanced the corrupt nature of local politics in B——, and heard for the third or fourth time what it was that a chap in the House of Commons had once told the Master of Balliol (who happened to be Michael's father).

A more serious symptom was the growing tendency to pass withering comments on Chinese characteristics. We would note their habit of lying to us about the length of the road or the number of mules available rather than wound us with the unpleasant truth. We could not get over the number of idly staring people, both in and out of uniform. We could not understand why it was that at one forwarding station there should be three pack-saddles but no riding-saddle, while at the next there were four riding-saddles but no pack-saddle. We despised people who were continuously addressing us in slogans, or urging us and each other to "rest a little, rest a little!" Because we were tired, we let these things push everything else under the surface.

Ralph is quiet and inexpressibly sound, with a mathematician's attention to detail and a missionary's sense for the something that ought to be done. Michael is tall, slightly bald, and with the makings of a fine professorial air. He draws some very pretty comparisons between the present Sino-Japanese struggle and certain aspects of the Hellenic Wars. Over little things he worries like a woman, but whenever anything really foul happened he bucked up no end. Michael pronounced most of the food along the way as simply inedible, but was very fortunately fond of *ch'ao mien*, or roasted flour, and could often be seen breathing frostily from his nose after taking a quiet tuck-in of this. He needed all the extra nourishment he could get, for while Ralph and I raced our donkeys together like children at the seaside, Michael strode away in front like a don on a walking tour.

Favourite theme for argument between these two was the correct answer to the question "Do you in England have mountains like our China's?" Ralph always maintained that the answer should be in the negative because of feet above sea-level. Michael would balk at this: "We-e-ell, I should say that the Chinese farmer does not reckon in terms of feet above sea-level; he is more likely to estimate the height from base to peak." Actually, if pressed, the Chinese peasant would probably say that the mountain is "three big-cakes twice drink water" high, or "ears cold" high.

"You'll be there by the time they've finished eating supper" is considered a good answer to anyone asking distances, or "Go up

the mountain and down the mountain and you're there". If pressed for actual figures, a pained expression will come over his face as he gives you some altogether fantastic number of *li*. You must then go on to ask, "Are the *li* big *li* or small *li*?" to which he will reply, "The *li* are not big," or "The *li* are not small," as the case may be. There is a good deal of support for the theory that the peasant automatically gives the distances from his own home, regardless of where he happens to be at the moment. At a time of vast national migration this system tends to be impractical.

The mountains on either side of the valley that leads down to the Yellow River at Yuanchu seemed to press down over the men who were creeping along zigzag paths cut out from their flanks. Down in a stony ravine a blind man in uniform asked us to lead him along. Ralph guided him carefully along by one end of his stick, crossing and re-crossing the river by stepping-stones every few hundred yards. A fevered soldier started out from some rags as we rounded a corner, asking us to help him move into the shade. Stretcher-parties were moving slowly southwards, with limbs like sticks, caked in blood and dirt, lying uncovered and pressing directly onto criss-cross ropes of the home-made stretchers. There were no nurses, and no food or water for the whole day's travel in sun and dust. I sat down by the road to watch a party of sick soldiers deemed fit to walk back to hospital. As they came opposite me they could see for the first time a false crest in the road, with a further long hill ahead of them. Some sank down with a look of infinitely aged exhaustion on their faces; others had the energy to search for lice in their coat edges, and blood spread slowly up their thumbnails.

Over and against this trickle of sub-existence, the path was humming with busy life. Teams of sturdy mules, each fitted with a metal tray to carry 4000 rounds of ammunition, pushed everything else out of their way. Long lines of strong coolies, paid one cent per mile, swung along with 100 pounds on either end of their carrying-poles. Donkeys and men staggered and snorted up and down the hills with top-heavy loads of padded winter uniforms.

"You, white-gloved officer sitting so neat and slippered on your mule," I thought, "and you, permanent-waved wife on a donkey behind; yes, and you, strong soldier striding along in your rope sandals—spare a thought for the thing on the stretcher, and for your ghost that shrinks into the cliff to watch you pass."

The Yellow River, when we finally reached it, was rather disappointingly unimposing, and until we came close enough to see



the current it seemed unbelievable that such a narrow strip of water had kept the Japanese back all the way from Kaifeng to Mongolia. The ferry here at Yuanchi runs only after air-raid hours, and the loess cliffs were already turning red with the sunset as our craft cast off from the northern bank. It was a flat-bottomed barge built of thick boards clamped together with massive iron staples. A huge patchwork sail flapped aloft, and from either side projected several oars; these were thirty feet long and had to be manned by three men each, but their blades dipped only three feet into the water. For'ard, a fan-shaped thicket of ropes ran out to a clump of chanting pullers who walked, half-doubled-up, along the shore or knee-deep in the water. Broad ledges along either of the ship's sides served as runways for a crew of pole-pushers. Another great rudder oar hung over the stern, and was manned by the captain.

On the near side the water ran slowly over some shallows, through which we were pulled and punted infinitesimally upstream. Then the skipper, who had been peering into the distance as though steering a speed-boat through foul water, swung his eyes back on deck.

"All well?"

"Aye!"

"Put out her prow!"

The pullers had let go their ropes, the great oars were dipping feverishly to the crew's breathless chant as we swung out diagonally across the current and were swept down past the people standing on the far bank. Half a mile downstream we pulled suddenly and incredibly into still water.

On the south bank a heavily bombed but still thriving town was doing trade with the soldiers and supply trains going across the river. The streets were gay with paper lanterns and the first prostitutes seen since Peiping.

Walking across the corridor between river and railway, we overtook long lines of ox-carts on which the wounded and sick who had managed to get this far across the river were now lying. Heavy beams pressed against their solid iron wheels as the carts wound downhill, making a symphony of clear, rolling vibration through the crisp autumn atmosphere. At every jolt of the rigid wooden chassis the men would gasp and grip the sides to prevent themselves from being thrown out.

That night we came to the Base Hospital, a full week's journey from the nearest fighting, and went to call on the doctor in

charge. His room was covered with elaborate charts, and an officer's sword and trappings hung ostentatiously on the wall. Ralph, who always has to get statistics for everything, asked him what percentage of his cases died under treatment or on the operating table.

"Oh, we're not bothered with that." The doctor made a confidential little grimace in our direction. "If a man's going to die he will do it before he gets here."

A fleet of empty army trucks had passed by the wounded soldiers struggling along the road. Now it passed by Ralph in the top half of an old uniform, passed by my sadly soiled home-made pants, but pulled up at the sight of Michael's grey flannel "bags", his almost-white linen coat with an Oxford cut, and his professorially bald back view. So we all three got a ride down to the railway at Mienchih.

There was no train till evening, and we lay resting in a little booth of mud and reeds, eating persimmon and mutton pasties and looking out at the wonderful metal rails that would carry us, without the slightest effort on our part, all the way to Sian.

But on reaching Tungkwan, where the line comes down close to the river and Japanese guns on the north bank are visible only half a mile away, we had to get out and walk round through the mountains to another train that was waiting twenty miles farther on.

From the cliffs above Tungkwan we looked across the half-deserted city to where Japanese motor-trucks were going to and fro on the far side of the river. In full view of the Japanese, thousands of donkeys, rickshas and wheelbarrows shuttled passengers from one train to another. Some sat side-saddle, with crossed legs and a studied air of nonchalance; others straddled their beasts, railing and kicking for more speed. Some were surrounded with multiform belongings, others carried nothing more than a pot of pickle in one hand and an umbrella in the other. Beasts and men tugged and sweated through thick yellow dust, and became locked in cursing heaps where the road was narrow.

From Tungkwan to Sian the Lunghai Railway runs through an ancient corroded countryside; the roads have been worn down by the wheels of centuries, so that only the tops of the carts passing along them are visible, and whole villages modelled in mud are scarcely distinguishable from the crumbling loess cliffs around them. Donkeys plough the terraces that rise over the hills, washed

in sun and tawny sand, and half-way up into the high mountains beyond.

It was after midnight when the train pulled up alongside Sian's massive city wall. Over-awed by such luxuries as running water and spring beds in the hotel bedroom, we stacked our dirty clothes in a corner, hoping that whatever was inside would not jump out, and crept between white sheets, dreaming of buttered toast and coffee in the morning. Three hours later we woke instead to the sound of an air-raid siren.

## CHAPTER III

### NEW HINTERLAND

THE CITY WALL of Sian was built 1500 years ago to the width of three ox-carts and the height of ten men; fortunately the city never lived up to its name, "Western Peace", so no one ever considered pulling the wall down; and in these days of menace from the sky the old wall becomes once more the city's fortress: far below its square, wind-corroded battlements, damp and draughty catacombs secrete tens of thousands of people in safety.

As our eyes became accustomed to the darkness we could make out the sides of a corridor about five feet wide, lined with narrow earthen ledges on which people were already sitting, and with smoky oil-lamps in recesses.

"Pass along to the end, please; make room for those coming in behind," a soldier called out.

A soothsayer with a roving eye, a wild lock of hair, and cheekbones gleaming in the flickering light was creating a pleasantly spooky atmosphere of unreality. Suddenly he was silent, pointing upwards with his finger. We sat tensely, nerves in tune to the softly beating vibrations, wondering if the huge pile of earth above us could withstand the shock of a direct hit. Then an embarrassed voice broke the silence. "It's all right," it said, "it's only our cat purring. I bring her down here to nurse because she's so frightened when we leave her at home." The planes never came that day, and we sat afflicted only with cramp and boredom on the clammy ledge for the rest of the morning.

After a week's continuous air alarms and bombings, everyone who could do so left Sian. I took the train 140 miles westwards to the terminus at Paöchi. In our coach, the attention of those who could not find places was concentrated on four seats occupied by three grown-ups and a baby. Of course everyone wanted Granny to nurse the baby and make room for another person, but the father would hear none of it. "The child's sick," he said, "and besides, I bought a ticket for it." This argument lasted well into the night, with the man enlarging on the ethics of ticket-buying and ailing mites, his wife egging him on, and the old lady cackling silently to herself, with the child stretched out at full

length beside her. The diversion pleased everybody, and actually gave rise to several subsidiary arguments in other parts of the car. By midnight the crowd was sleeping on its feet; the child woke up for the first time and cried, but not even Granny paid any attention.

This trip recalled one I had taken along the same railway soon after my arrival in China. I had innocently boarded a refugee train for Hankow evacuees. There was no question on that train of having or not having a seat; the passengers sprawled higgledy-piggledy over baggage and boxes, bales and bedding, pet dogs, birds in cages, and all the useless multitude of odds and ends that scared people take up when the moment to leave home suddenly comes upon them. We lay on these for four torporous days, our clothes stinking and sweaty, our fleas and lice rampant. Those men who had fought their way to resting-places on the luggage-racks snored peacefully, in imminent danger of falling out onto those below. Use of all doors was impossible, but at each station the train awoke in turmoil as new ants propelled new top-heavy bundles through its skeleton sides. Brave souls lashed themselves to the girders underneath the coaches, while up above people lay baking in the sun's rays and frying on the hot metal roofs. Children were held out of windows and encouraged by the sight of the locomotive tanking up to make water, or let down for more serious matters on the end of a rope whenever the locomotive clanked right away out of sight to help with the local shunting.

That trainload, and hundreds more like it, made history when it reached the end of the line at Paochi, where, confronted with the massive barrier of the Tsingling Mountains, the refugees settled down in a mushroom colony of mud huts and caves outside the east wall. Eighteen months later, when I walked through it from the station, the new East Suburb was bigger than the city itself, its houses were taller and better built, its main street was broader and better-surfaced. It was six o'clock in the morning and bitterly cold, but the street was already ringing with hammers and saws, and the builders were grunting cheerily as they rammed down new mud walls into the frames.

I remember vividly my first meeting with Paochi's magistrate Wang Feng-jei, that morning. He was standing on some steps inside the *yamen*—a tough-looking, thick-set figure in a dressing-gown, hair still tousled, beard unshaven—to watch his police drag a condemned man off to execution. The shackled fellow dropped to his knees pleading a last pardon. Wang made no sign.

"He killed a man," he said quietly in answer to my look, and led me off to where K. M. Lu, Wu Ch'u-fei and some others had made the first field headquarters of Chinese Industrial Co-operatives in the magistrate's *yamen*.

Other memories crowd over this one. Wang with the little refugee girl he took out of a brothel to become the daughter of his home. Wang talking to the peasants about opium suppression, sympathizing with the families of bombing victims, addressing the International Children's Day meeting, setting right a co-op's relations with unsympathetic police. Wang beating a father who had rebound his daughter's feet after he himself had seen to it the day before that they should be unbound. Wang falling off his bicycle in his eagerness to stop quickly and correct something unsightly on his main street.

To give a picture of Paochi's growth, I can do no better than to piece together the story that its "co-op magistrate", Wang Feng-jei, North-west Industrial Co-operatives' Director Li Kuang-mien (K. M. Lu) and others have on various occasions told me.

## II

Wang Feng-jei, Traffic Manager of the Chengtai Railway, left Taiyuan, in Shansi, two days before the Japanese army took it over, without any very clear idea in his head as to his future. As soon as he had crossed the Fenn River behind the city, the last bridge was bombed to pieces behind him. To whatever his journey was leading him, there must be no return journey, he thought; it must be one that built where others destroyed, and showed results not in edifices, but in less easily destructible human values.

Some months later he was lying on his camp bed in one of the hovels that were an organic part of Paochi's East Suburb. Insects fell off the walls and ceiling onto his bed. Prostitutes entertained their customers on the other side of a thin partition wall. Through a jagged hole left in the wall after an air raid, he could see the long lines of mud-and-reed shacks down either side of the railway. It all showed up fitfully now, in the light of the evening camp-fires, and only occasionally was anyone visible, crouching low to pass through a mat doorway.

That day and for days past he had watched the refugees crowd off the trains. Some had built shacks. Some, too poor even to get the most primitive housing materials, had found deserted

caves in the hillside, or dug fresh holes for themselves in its yellow loess flank. Utterly played out, some had just sat down for days on the dusty plain beside the railway. There were no sanitary arrangements, and no one came to bury the casual dead; the only drinking-water came from ponds or from the muddy Wei River. Seven expectant mothers had come to the inn in one day begging rooms for confinement.

Wang's friend and fellow Manchurian K. M. Lu walked round from colony to colony of refugees, talking, arguing, explaining. As soon as he found a group of refugees willing to work together in a co-operative he brought them for registration to Wang's *yamen*, and by October 1938, when Hankow fell, there were already some ten or fifteen co-ops working. Among the first to be settled were the Hankow factory girls whom Madame Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement had moved westwards out of the way of the Japanese. If Madame Chiang was behind the evacuation of these girls, she was behind Wang's *hsien* Government men and also behind Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, so it was not purely by chance that these three began their new life in the hinterland together. Another big group of early settlers from the east were indigenous Chinese Christians belonging to the True Church of Jesus, who had been wanting to form their own industrial colony since before the war. Many of these had brought knitting and other small machines with them; others formed weaving co-ops, and one group started a restaurant serving Southern dishes. Groups from Honan, Shansi, Hopei, Shantung and Manchuria were put to work, and as far as possible arranged in streets according to their places of origin.

Barely had the original refugee situation been relieved, when the heavy bombings of Sian created a fresh tidal wave, that carried Paochi's population swiftly over the 50,000 mark and left a fresh layer of human flotsam beside the railway. By the summer of 1939, Paochi was getting used to the feel of itself as a city of about 60,000 souls, with new suburbs springing up over the country all round it.

At this time there were 104 industrial co-operatives with 1280 members and other workers in Paochi. Only a few private factories had begun work, though there were several big ones under construction. With a total loan capital of \$173,000, the co-ops were putting out about \$130,000 worth of produce every month. But when military stalemate set in through 1939, Japanese and Shanghai-made goods began to flow across the

*lines from occupied territory in ever-increasing quantities, and to brighten the shop windows of Sian, Paochi, and other cities all along the railway.*

Co-ops working up local raw materials by semi-mechanized industrial methods were now faced with the competition of a fully developed industry on the coast; the less efficient of them began to lose money, while the larger and better-organized were forced to drastically revise their production policies. By autumn, most of the weaving co-ops had turned over to making coarse army cloth, leaving the better-class markets to the merchants who brought goods from the east.

Indusco organizers worked to close down uneconomic units, amalgamate promising ones or move them back from the railway to places where demand was still elastic. Sixty-two co-ops remained in Paochi, of which twenty-seven were textile, six machine shops and two printers. The rest produced hosiery, soap, candles, leather and leather goods, charcoal, timber, houses, furniture, bricks and tiles, bags and suitcases, paper, educational goods, medicated cotton and gauze, puffed rice and canned foodstuffs.

Working alongside the main industrial drive was the C.I.C. Women's Work Department, which started, with help from Madame Chiang, in early 1939 under Jen Chu-ming, a Hunanese who had returned to China from Europe after the outbreak of war. Jen Chu-ming's job was to give training and livelihood to the refugee women, help the peasant women understand the national crisis that had brought the refugees to live amongst them, and get both to work together in groups for self-help. In caves, in temples, in farm courtyards, on village threshing-floors, the girl organizers gathered women and children about them for literacy classes, talks, newspaper reading and sewing groups. They spent their evenings holding classes in the co-ops already formed. And out of this triangular contact between the women, the girl organizers and the co-ops themselves grew textile courses which trained hundreds of women to support themselves, and created an army of domestic wool-spinners which before the end of the winter had spun 420 tons of woollen yarn for the co-ops to weave into army blankets. In Paochi district alone 1000 peasant women, 300 refugees and 200 crippled soldiers earned a spare-time income of \$66,000 in the winter of 1939-1940.

On this foundation, the north-west co-operatives felt able to accept a bigger order for blankets the following year. To supply them with yarn, the Women's Department mobilized 35,000



spinners, who before the end of the second weaving programme had spun 820 tons of woollen yarn. Six primary schools, three women's clubs and three clinics were run by North-west C.I.C. in conjunction with this economic mobilization work.

The make-up of Paochi's population was reflected in the primary school students. An analysis of a Paochi Indusco Primary School taken at random in 1941 showed that, out of ninety-five children, twenty were from the families of Madame Chiang's factory girls from Hankow, eighteen were natives of the Shanghai district, seventeen came from the Yellow River flood areas in Honan, twelve were local children from Shensi, ten came from Japanese-occupied Hopei, and the rest were southerners from Anhwei, Yunan, Chekiang, Hunan and Canton. Fifty-one were the children of workers in co-ops and factories, fifteen came from merchant homes, fourteen from the army, ten were local peasants and five were sons of Lunghai Railway workers. The four teachers themselves had come to Paochi from Manchuria, Shanghai, Kaifeng in Honan, and Yulin, close to the Great Wall in northern Shensi.

The social services organized by C.I.C. were backed up by magistrate Wang's own improvements from the *hsien* Government. The first of these was his water supply. Finding that his servant drew the water and his refugees washed their clothes in the same pond, Wang himself went out into the mountains behind the city to locate a spring. Iron pipes were out of the question, but Wang figured the war would be over by the time his wooden ones needed replacing. Three months after the spring had been found, 57,000 gallons of pure water were bubbling into Paochi every day, and the quantity was soon to be increased to 93,000.

If Wang had ever forgotten that refugee women asked at the inn for places of confinement when he first arrived, he was constantly reminded of it as expectant mothers came demanding that he, the magistrate, should find them rooms in the *yamen*. The first *hsien* maternity home was started on the equivalent of five dollars, United States currency, and was in charge of two penniless refugee nurses who had come to him for relief. Thirty cases were admitted as soon as the doors were opened.

Another score to be settled against his early days in the inn was the matter of the prostitutes. About 2000 of these, with the innkeepers to whom they belonged, had come to Paochi from cities along the railway, and had found the atmosphere of this

shifting border town congenial. Numerous upstarts had made a good thing out of the cheap supply of girls, and set themselves up in tea-houses with refugee girls who would work for two meals a day and a gown.

At first Wang tried taxation, but this aroused such a storm of opposition in powerful quarters that he was forced to drop it. Instead, he formed them into an "Amazon Phalanx", gave them classes in literacy, national history and first aid, insisted that they attend public meetings once a month, dressed in black uniforms and with their faces washed clean.

During his first rainy season the magistrate was plagued by irate truck-drivers demanding that he find them mules or oxen to pull their trucks out of pot-holes in the road. As Paochi stood at the junction of the Lunghai Railway with the highways to Chungking and Lanchow (*i.e.*, to Burma and Russia) communications were obviously a matter for his immediate attention. Soon it was Wang who plagued the truck-drivers with new parking regulations on his broad re-surfaced street. For months he spent every moment he could spare away from the *yamen* persuading or forcing householders to knock down their walls and rebuild farther back. Rickshas as well as motor-trucks now have their own parking places. Boy scouts help police marshal pedestrians to the left-hand side of the street. Peddlers and beggars are relegated ruthlessly to back streets. At fixed hours of the day, boys with neat white arm-bands parade the street ringing dinner-bells, and citizens emerge from every doorway to sprinkle clean water in the path of the road-sweeping squad.

No man could do so much in so short a time without arousing opposition. The old local vested interests, the new interests vested in anarchy, and political opponents who sought Wang's position for members of their own cliques, directed their first concentrated attack against his free water system. The system prescribed by tradition would have been the monthly issue of coupons to consumers, and a man taking them back again for each pail of water carried away. Wang's idea was to give water free to all comers, but ask the bigger consumers, such as banks, restaurants and bath-houses, to pay five dollars each per month. This was made the excuse for terrific protest, and many reports were spread of Wang's Red leanings. Suspicion was heightened when the magistrate, who is a Christian of Methodist conversion, used a text about universal brotherhood in his New Year's talk to the *yamen* Government officials. In the end, a special Party emissary was sent down

from Chungking to investigate the serious charge of "Communist thought underlying Roman Catholic propaganda".

Wang's daily tour of the new city never failed to prove exciting. At any moment he was liable to catch sight of some offending feature—a man emptying litter into the gutter, a scabby dog that ought to be shot, badly parked trucks, an unsightly shop frontage or a dangerously hung sign. At any moment he might forget all in his enthusiasm for some new plan—a garden here, an elevated road there, a police station somewhere else. At such moments, Wang rapidly dismounted, and walked swiftly towards the object of his anger or inspiration, leaving his bicycle to be caught by a guard following behind.

In his second year as magistrate, when his youthful officials had unbound hundreds of girls' feet in the mountains, and cut off thousands of men's pigtails, there was nearly a revolt. "Pigtails are forests and forests are rain," said a delegation of suspicious peasants. "No pigtails, no rain—and what can the magistrate do about that?"

Wang couldn't do much, except undertake a tour through the villages over his whole *hsien*. Such a thing was quite unprecedented. It is questionable whether Wang himself was more struck by what he saw on his tour or the people by what they saw of the magistrate. "I'll have to fix that countryside same as I straightened out the street," he remarked to me one day after his return.

But he was evidently too good a man to be left as magistrate of Paochi. Partly as a result of political intrigue against him, and partly because the railway needed his powers of organization, he was taken back to be Traffic Manager of the Lunghai Railway. By this time, Paochi was already one of the biggest cities in the North-west.

### III

"Ocean devil" is the traditional name for foreigners, and "East Ocean devil" means the Japanese. "Ocean candles" are the paraffin-wax candles from Shanghai, as distinguished from fat native tallow candles. "Ocean carts" are rickshas, which came in with the new smooth roads to replace Chinese wheelbarrows, and "ocean donkey" means just bicycle.

Henceforward, the North-west headquarters of C.I.C. was to have an "ocean secretary". I was given a little metal badge with

"Gung Ho" ("Work Together") No. 114 on it. I purchased a necktie, a teapot, a bedspread of co-op cloth, and pinned some photos up on the wall of my twelve-by-six-foot room. A berth was found for my typewriter in the office for a few days, but the noise it made was so much louder than all the abaci in the place that I was politely asked to take it back to my bedroom.

At first I went out in the afternoon to find out all I could about one individual co-op, have the chairman read over the minutes (it always gave him confidence to find that I was illiterate) of the last co-op meeting, talk about his difficulties and successes, or express his ideas for improvement. My uniqueness gave me a good deal of scope. No one could bring up the objection "If we let this ocean secretary in, all the others will want to come in too", so I was allowed to sit in the back row of many C.I.C. staff meetings and given many a half-hour's private *tête-à-tête*.

From afternoons spent in ferreting out stories in Paochi I was sent 160 miles south to a small co-op depot at Mienhsien, near Hanchung. Where the Han River runs out of the mountains a man stood lonely as a fishing bird in shallow water, blue smock opened at the chest and pants rolled up to the knees, with his rough sieve and a shallow pan beside him. The mountains rose gaunt, rocky and treeless on either side. But the man's loneliness and the barrenness of his surroundings were only skin deep. Behind the mountain's bare sides was gold, and behind the man were thousands of others working in co-ops federated with his own.

At the Federation office in Mienhsien, where the gold from fifty co-ops was collected for sale to the banks, I saw a member from one of the co-ops far away in the mountains bring out a precious package of little gold nuggets from the lining of his coat. The gold was weighed, the transaction carefully entered up in the books under everyone's close scrutiny, and the member went away to the granary in a back room, where he drew some of the 3000 bushels of wheat stored by the Federation for distribution to members' families during hard winter months.

Down the Han, 200 miles farther, another seventy-one co-ops, with 2000 members, many of them refugees from Hupeh and Honan, were working in a sixty-mile radius of Ankang. If Emperor Hsia Yu could have returned through 4000 years to stand with me beside the temple commemorating his favourite fishing spot, he would have seen a party of refugees making a new kind of catch in its shadows, and earning themselves a good bag of savings for the New Year's holiday.

"What would the difference be if people washed gold for themselves instead of forming into co-operatives to do so?" I tried to find out.

By joining together, co-ops can hire a group of specialized gold prospectors to guide the panners to the best sites. Some of these sites need twenty or thirty days' preparation; not until after forming co-ops can the washers get enough capital to tide them over this period. If working individually, gold-washers on good sites have to give at least 20 per cent of their gold to the landlords; but C.I.C., by acting as intermediary with the landlords, is usually able to get terms as low as 5 per cent. Owing to lack of capital and shortage of food in the spring-time, starving peasants used to beg thirty or fifty dollars from the landlords with which to start gold-washing; no interest was charged for this, but the condition of the loan was that the gold should be sold solely through the landlord, who paid only two-thirds of the market price. The co-op Federation handed the full price on the gold back to the washers, keeping back only the bank's sales commission to cover its own expenses. Many gold-washers working in lonely places had fallen into the hands of army press-gangs, either for military service or for carrying loads, and gold production in the Ankang district had recently dropped by over 25 per cent because the people were afraid to go out and wash; though C.I.C. will not beg members off military service except in cases of necessary skilled labour, it can defend them from illegal conscription.

With the increasingly drastic fall in purchasing power of money, the local gentry and agents from as far away as Chungking had been buying gold for illegal hoarding. A good deal of gold had also been bought to smuggle southwards down the Han River to Japanese-occupied Hankow. The result was that the black-market price for gold in Ankang had risen to two-and-a-half times the legal price paid by the national banks. By organizing the washers into co-operatives, leakages of this sort were being checked, and at the same time a fair wage was assured to the workers themselves.

Returning over the mountains from Ankang in a snorting Russian truck that had been converted to burn local co-operatively made alcohol, I stayed for a time at Hanchung, in the centre of the rich basin that extends for sixty miles along the Han River in the heart of the Tsingling Mountains. In the time of the Three Kingdoms, Hanchung was the central battleground for

triangular contests between North, South and East; today, being the junction of the Han River route through the mountains with the road from Chungking to Lanchow and Russia, it is a vital link in the struggle which North and South are carrying on against East. Industrially, this part of the valley also has a long and colourful history; in the mountains are iron, copper, lead, coal, gold, quartz, asbestos and wood-oil nuts; in the valley are cotton, hemp, silk, bamboo, palm-fibre, lacquer and tea.

The significant job here was not primarily to find work for refugees, but to supply organization and running capital, to standardize production, to re-group workers into economic units instead of families, to arrange joint supply of raw materials and joint sale of products, for the old handicrafts of the place were being killed by war-time uncertainty and rising costs. An example of what is being done may be taken from the Hanchung Oilcloth Co-op.

The nine members of this co-op were all former workers in a small factory under private management. They had been badly exploited by their owner, who was a long-nailed petty official with an exceedingly vicious temper. His second wife, whom he had married hoping to get an unpaid manager for the factory, had been constantly beaten and humiliated, until at last she had cast in her lot with the workmen and left with them to set up a new factory.

But they could find no capital until some members of a canvas co-op came in to talk, leaving behind them two small Indusco pamphlets. The group met daily to listen to these being read aloud by the wife of their old master. Discussion followed, and then the thing was finally settled—they would form a co-op, and the woman Ching Wenshiu should be its chairwoman.

C.I.C. office, approached for a loan, was out of funds, but by writing in the members' looms as share capital it was discovered that an immediate advance of cotton yarn could be secured on this backing from the Federation Supply and Marketing Department. The profits on the first batch of plain cloth would buy wood-oil, which would be used for oiling part of the second batch, and so on, gradually shifting right over to oilcloth.

During the first three months \$9040 worth of cotton yarn had been advanced from the Supply and Marketing Department. In this time fifty-four bales of broadcloth and six of oiled cloth had been delivered for sale, which exceeded the amount of raw

material loaned by \$1020. Ching Wen-shiu and her fellows worked hard and slept soundly.

But the looms were not always busy; for the Supply and Marketing Department itself was often short of running capital. Once when Wen-shiu took in her cloth, she was told that there was no money to pay for it and no more cotton yarn in stock either.

"We've sent our traveller to Paochi with all our spare funds to buy more yarn," said the man behind the receiving counter. "He'll be back in a few days."

"What can we do meanwhile?" she asked anxiously. Her cloth would have fetched a good price out on the street right then. "Food costs us \$700 every month, and if we can't keep working we shall starve."

"Suppose we give you rice in exchange for your cloth?" suggested the salesman. "As for vegetables, perhaps you'll be able to find a way of your own."

So Wen-shiu ran home, well pleased, and after telling the others about it, she fixed her headcloth and went right out to borrow some vegetables from a friendly stall-keeper down the road. I happened to meet her on her way back, and we walked up to the co-op together.

"He never really thought we'd do it," she said later, about her husband—"not run our own business and be able to support ourselves, I mean. At first he just laughed and said I'd come back when I got hungry. Then, when he heard how we were getting on, he must have become very angry."

"First he went to the C.I.C. office people and tried to use his influence to have the co-op closed down. But they told him we were working well, and had done nothing against the law."

"Then he went to the magistrate and told him that our men and women members were living sinfully together. He . . ." Her smooth, rounded features were all screwed up, she spoke hoarsely, faster and faster, fighting to keep back tears.

Then suddenly, with a toss of her head, she became a strong working woman. Putting finger and thumb to her nose she shot the mucus harshly out, in mock-fastidious contempt, and went on, "Just because we've made a success of our own factory instead of his, he had to insult us with such vile words! Don't his four gentle-sons all live in a mixed college for men and women? And why should we uneducated people be any different from them?"

The night after this conversation, Ching Wen-shiu went back to try once more at making a success of her old home. Next morning her mother found her hanging unconscious by a rope round her waist from the ceiling, her hands tied behind her back, her body black and bruised. She called in C.I.C., who called in the police. The husband and his eldest son were arrested, and Wen-shiu went to the hospital.

A few days later she was back at the co-op, and the co-op had received a contract from the Public Highways Administration, placed through the Federation Supply and Marketing Department. As Wen-shiu herself told me of this on my next visit, I could see that she regarded it as a fit reply to her husband. Homeless, she was bringing all the dynamic force of an illiterate, embittered and intensely sympathetic woman to the job of making a successful family out of her co-op.

#### IV

Back in Paochi, I found that eating in restaurants along the road had spoiled me for the communal life. I no longer relished watery rice and peanuts for breakfast. The number of people at each table had increased, so that we no longer stood shoulder to shoulder to eat, but formed up around the table in a circular queue, each with his chopstick hand inwards. Faced with ruthless competition, I found that the dishes were always quite empty before my own fingers had properly limbered up. The result was that at least once each day I had to take refuge outside in a restaurant. The difficulty of finding anyone to accompany me on these expeditions was not due, as at first I feared, to any kind of gastronomic race prejudice, but merely to the fact that most of my friends were quite unable to afford even the cheapest restaurants. My own monthly salary of seven-and-a-half dollars in United States currency (later increased to ten dollars, United States currency) was always literally eaten away, but many of them were earning only a third of what I was, and supporting wives and children on it as well.

The organizers, students from Indusco training classes, and Women's Department girls in Paochi had at least one good cheap way of enjoying themselves. This was called "The Tea and Peanuts Meeting".

On Saturday evenings they arrived in from the country for the week-end at headquarters, carrying string bags with towel, tooth-



brush and mug; shoes in hand, toes and legs caked in mud if the weather were wet. Gathering in the Women's Department, they emptied out their pockets onto the office desks. On the first Saturday of the month the pool was generally big enough to buy chicken and tangerines, on the second pork and spinach, on the third hard-boiled eggs and raw turnips, and on the fourth the meeting would be just what it said it was—a tea and peanut meeting.

Charcoal came out of office expenses, so there was always a good pile of red embers in a platter on the floor; holes in the windows were stopped up with old socks, and soon the room was pervaded by a comfortable smell of toast, tangerine, tallow candle and carbon gas. The girls knew any number of songs, and some of them could read music miraculously if inaccurately from numbers placed in a row under the words of the song. Engineer Wu Ch'u-fei, always a connoisseur of feminine society, would usually turn up to render some of the American songs he had learned in Michigan, and then lean back happily cracking peanuts for the rest of the evening.

The girls were a boisterous crowd, always laughing at somebody or something. They managed somehow to be gay and unsuppressed without in the least "going modern" or "being Westernized". "Big Jen", as Jen Chu-ming was called, had no airs about her, for all her European education and her Embassy friends, and the other girls—Pao I, mountainous niece of Manchuria's "Young Marshal", Chang Hsueh-liang, Ni Liu-ying, Shanghai school-teacher who had walked cross-country to Paochi and was later killed in an air raid, Liu Shih-fan, a big gun-toting girl from Harbin, "Tiny" Yang, a Szechwanese student, and the rest—took their lead from her. K. M. Lu always laughed when the subject of his Women's Department was brought up—"disreputable gang of guerillas" he styled them. Charles Fenn, an American cameraman who came to Paochi, confided to me politely, after taking a good look round, that he was finding Paochi a "delightful holiday from sex-appeal".

Gradually the old rough gang was replaced by new and more exquisite types. In feminine competition, or as proof of correct political ideas, those of the old gang that remained began to tie their hair up in ringlets and spend increasing proportions of their allowances on cosmetics and fancy shoes. As far as the Women's Department was concerned, I resigned my position as mascot and became instead just a foreigner with a camera, who could some-

times be beguiled into taking one's picture in a dainty pose suitable for presentation to the boy-friend.

## V

To Bong, the Chinese were mean, lying, face-saving, boot-sucking, swaggering, cruel, and everything else that they were supposed to be in the days when opium and concessions were part of the White Man's Burden.

He was the son of a Cantonese laundryman in California, and had been educated at John Muir School in Merced, California, where he was one of the brightest students of his class. But when Bong, or S. H. Jeung, was fifteen and just beginning high school, his parents harked back to old Canton, decided that Bong must be the link between the Chinese and American branches of the family, and packed him off on a steamship to his grandmother's with a letter instructing her to put him through Lingnan School for overseas Chinese, and then to find him a good Cantonese wife.

The first part was not so bad, and Bong made some friends among the other American-born Chinese at Lingnan. But Grandmother was an old-style Chinese lady against whom he felt a strange repulsion, knowing that he should look on her as kin; and the Chinese girl she had waiting for Bong seemed hopelessly removed from his ideas of a good wife, and quite ridiculous in the way she trod over her high heels trying to walk like an American.

So with matrimony in the offing, Bong ran away to join the Chinese Army as a truck-driver. He served in the Yangtze campaign, and drove loads of explosives through heavy bombing and shellfire during the evacuation of Hsinyang, north of Hankow. But he found no friends among the truck-drivers. It never seemed to him now that the Chinese Army was fighting for democracy, as he had thought in America. He waged a private battle against his environment, refused to "squeeze" on gasoline, and got into all sorts of trouble for speaking out what he thought. An officer took away his passport and clapped him in jail after someone had denounced him for personal reasons as a spy. Later on, having been reduced to putting all his unhappiness into a letter home, after the letter was caught by the military censors he learned to bottle everything up inside him.

"Everything was black!" he told me in Paochi. "It was dangerous to read or show any signs of intelligence. There was nobody I could talk to; the other drivers mostly went off to

brothels or smoked opium when they could get it. I was always being denounced as either a spy, a Communist or a half-breed."

While stationed in Sian, Bong wrote another letter home, and at last received a reply. "'We sent you to China to study, get a wife, and uphold our Cantonese traditions,'" Bong quoted the letter to me from memory. "They said I wasn't their son any more, and threw that 'Good iron is not beaten into nails' stuff up at me."

Bong had come into Paochi that afternoon on his truck, and had sought out the C.I.C. office because he heard there was a foreigner there. I lent him some old copies of the *Reader's Digest*, which he read avidly. Then we went out for a walk in the sun; Bong showed me pictures of his school friends and recounted old plans for working his way through college. He spoke vaguely of volunteering to drive a truck in Burma. Secretly I resolved to keep him in Paochi until I could write to the American Consul and to his parents in California. Bong promised not to leave for a week at least, and even asked tentatively for a job in C.I.C., which I was able to arrange for him through Wu Ch'u-fei.

But at four o'clock next morning Bong sat down to write me a letter, and then hopped onto his truck going south.

DEAR SIR [wrote Bong],

God is far away and the home fire is burning low. Realizing the grave danger that is going to affect every youth of today, prompted me to engage in intensive introspection. Discovering that knowledge is essential in the course of building a healthy character, I have determined to continue my journey southwards, hoping to succeed my goal satisfactorily. I felt deeply ashamed of myself for the outrageous behaviour and fantastic action that I have brought about to trouble Sir's precious time. Sincerely hoping, Sir, would forgive my unforgivable rudeness.

Thank you ever so much for your kind hospitality and precious advice, I am

Yours respectfully,

S. H. JEUNG

P.S. I hope we will continue our walk in the future, perhaps in the States. Then we could walk faster and freely, away from Background and Face.

I was never able to trace him. Later I got a letter from his school principal, Miss Sheehy, to whom I had written about him.

. . . This afternoon Bong's father appeared at my home with a letter to Bong from his little sister for me to enclose with mine to the Consul. He was so excited last night thinking about his boy that he could not sleep. . . . He has sent the money for Bong's passage to a friend in Hong Kong.

I had a strong fellow-feeling for Bong. Each of us, coming from the West with the same kind of outlook, had been living alone among the Chinese, but while he had experienced only the seamiest side of an ancient civilization, and, with youth's intolerance, had magnified it into something a great deal more important than it really was, I had been living with people who were trying to build something new. We differed again in the letters we got from home. No one wrote sternly to me saying "Good cheese does not go into rat-traps, nor do good Englishmen become ocean secretaries". On the contrary, I was constantly, and even embarrassingly, being congratulated on being "at the heart of one of the most fruitful and constructive experiments in the world today", or on my "opportunity to play a part in the building of true democracy".

Writing publicity that would represent the facts and at the same time not let down this impression was one of my worries. Often I felt despairingly that I was too near the forest to get a good angle on its trees. Like Bong, I could see only the unprintable snakes and hyenas in the undergrowth, and felt quite angry with magazine articles sent me from America, written by people who had never seen our co-ops, and so could quite easily compose variations on the theme: "The amazing success of the thousands of little democracies that are now spreading irresistibly across the countryside has proved beyond doubt that the Chinese people are born co-operators."

## VI

The Chinese are just as much and just as little "born co-operators" as any other people. The intellectuals have an abnormally big bump for destructive intrigue and an equally abnormal capacity for revolutionary unselfishness. The peasants and workers have perhaps a bit more of conservatism in their make-up—accumulated mistrust of upper-class motives—and at the same time more determination to stand by each other in a

common cause, once they are convinced of its usefulness, than have the ordinary people of any other country.

- (1) *Intrigue and spiritual sabotage* + (2) *Mistrustfulness and conservatism* = (3) *Unselfishness and willingness to "eat bitterness"* + (4) *The will to struggle in a common cause.*

This is an equation which may too easily cancel itself out. The chief imponderable is (4). If the people can once be convinced that the movement means something real to them in terms of the rice-bowl, they will throw their weight into the balance, will absorb all the educational and democratic ideas that the intellectuals of (3) care to suggest to them, and (2) and (1) will be swept away in an irresistible democratic tide. In short, the indispensable precondition is *a good economic base*.

Now let us make some simple calculations. When the first co-ops were organized in 1938 the price of wheat (staple food in the North-west) was \$3.50 per bag; by spring 1942 it had risen to over \$100. In 1938 cotton yarn cost \$350 per bale, and by spring 1942 the price had gone up to \$8000. Production costs as a whole had risen by at least twenty times since autumn 1938. But whereas K. M. Lu in the early days used to reckon that \$2000 was an average loan for starting a new co-op, by spring 1942 there were 362 co-ops in the North-west operating on a total loan capital of \$4,215,000 (\$1,800,000 bank loan capital and \$2,415,000 government loan funds), which meant that the average loan capital per co-op had increased from \$2000 to \$11,644, or less than six times.

Most of the co-ops had invested nearly everything in equipment at the beginning, before money depreciated, so that the problem later on was always how to get enough circulating capital to keep the machines running. Professor J. B. Taylor of Yenching University estimated, after investigation of the Lanchow industrial co-ops, that for every dollar increase in running capital, production would increase by eighty-nine cents per month. In Paochi at least a quarter of the co-ops lay idle for lack of running capital through six months of 1941, with the result that overheads and food costs ate up their profits made during the remaining half of the year. Several other co-ops in Paochi had to borrow from moneylenders at 6 to 8 per cent monthly interest (72 to 96 per cent per annum), in order to prevent the banks foreclosing on valuable machinery. Army contractors and others farmed out raw materials and orders to

co-ops at blood-squeezing rates, relying on the fact that they found it difficult to "sack" their own members, and so would continue work on a losing basis rather than lie idle and have to foot the whole food and wage bill themselves.

Besides causing the co-ops direct business losses, under-capitalization caused the introduction of rich outsiders into the co-ops as members in order to get urgently needed funds. Since ordinary interest was not enough to attract investment in times of sharply rising prices, creditors insisted on becoming members with special dividend privileges in addition to interest as a condition of the loan, in exactly the way a man might buy a partnership in a business. Sometimes they were content to remain as "sleeping members" and were not seen within the co-op until profits were divided at the end of the year. But in one or two cases they interfered directly with co-op business, offered higher wages to those members who would agree to give up their claim on dividends, gradually undermined co-operative spirit, raised money from business friends with which to repay the original co-op loan, and turned the whole thing back into an ordinary sweatshop.

Under conditions of rising costs, the co-ops are in vital need of funds to buy ahead on raw materials as well as to pay their ordinary business running expenses. The practice grew up of earmarking production-quotas for weeks ahead to merchants who would make a generous advance payment. This could only be done with the very best quality goods, so that the co-ops tried to palm off the second-class stuff on the joint Supply and Marketing organization. This caused friction between the co-ops and the joint sales department, and at the same time harmed the latter's business reputation.

Having seen what effects under-capitalization is having on the co-operatives, let us now examine the three sources of C.I.C. capital up to date. Government, bank, and self-accumulated funds. The actual amount of bank loans to industrial co-operatives over the whole country does not exceed eight million, which is about equal to the output in one month of the co-ops in the North-west alone. Though the bank managers in Chungking are often far-sighted and liberal-minded men, genuinely interested in the movement, they have little control over the daily actions of the career men and professional bankers who occupy the strata immediately below them. These sub-managers or branch managers are not interested in production, as such, and have other

uses for local bank funds, so that many of them obstruct the execution of loan contracts signed by their superiors, and then spread rumours as to Indusco's political or economic unreliability in order to justify their own actions. In Sian, a contract for \$1,000,000 to be used in North-west co-ops was signed between C.I.C. and the Farmers' Bank at the end of 1940, but up to the time of writing not one dollar has been released. By contrast with the banks' policy towards co-operatives, the Paochi Branch of the Bank of China has \$10,000,000—more than the total investment in China's industrial co-operatives by all the banks in the country—invested in a single privately owned cotton-spinning mill.

The third source of capital, internal savings, is dependent on the other two. According to actual experience in Paochi, the co-ops constantly had to draw on their reserves before any good sum could be accumulated. Sufficient circulating capital to ensure continuous production is a first essential in the accumulation of reserves, for as soon as work stops, all profits as well as reserve funds are literally eaten up and disappear into overheads. If loan capital is too low, saving is impossible, but as soon as saving becomes possible and self-accumulated funds grow, outside investment is attracted. Loan capital and savings act together in a spiral.

Without increased capital, the whole Indusco system is, under present inflationary conditions, in danger of caving in from the bottom. To an ordinary business-man dealing in consumer goods in England or America, rising prices mean good profits. But this depends on at least three factors, all of which are at present unfavourable to Chinese Industrial Co-operatives. First, he assumes that he will be able to buy ahead on his raw materials. But under present conditions of under-capitalization the majority of co-ops have to wait until selling one lot of finished goods before buying raw materials for the next, with the result that they are always one jump behind the market.

Second, he assumes the power to put the brake on wages; the bigger the time-lag of wages behind prices, the bigger the owner's profits. But in a co-operative the wage-earner is the owner, so that any profit which the "owner" makes on the time-lag in wages will mean a loss in real wages (*i.e.*, in what he can buy with his wages) to himself.

Third, the selling price of the commodity produced must rise at least as fast, if not faster than its production costs. But this con-

dition is the hardest of all to satisfy. For while consumer goods are allowed in from the Japanese-occupied industrial centres to the east, raw materials are being cornered by the banks, and food costs (which constitute up to half the total costs of production in unmechanized or semi-mechanized industries) are soaring, partly owing to hoarding, but chiefly as a result of heavy taxation, payable only in wheat or other grains.

Only large new doses of capital, enabling the co-ops to buy their raw materials well ahead and to keep their existing equipment going at full capacity, can save C.I.C.

What is the way out? Broad considerations of national self-sufficiency, especially after the loss of the Burma Road, may create a definite policy of support for co-operative production in Chungking, or even in London and New York.

All the co-ops need capital some of the time, and some of the co-ops need capital all the time, but all the co-ops don't need equal amounts of capital all the time. A centralized banking system with an Indusco Treasury in each depot could immediately take up the slack in seasonal business by "dovetailing" the demands for capital from different co-operative industries, and spread what capital was available more evenly through the Indusco system.

By providing the co-ops with regular doses of short-term funds urgently needed for their business expenses, the Indusco Treasuries would provide them with good reasons both for staying within the Indusco family and for abiding by the family rules. The threat to withdraw funds would be enough, when necessary, to stop the drift away from sound co-operative practice.

The Indusco Treasury system has already been tried for more than a year in Paochi and Lanchow under the direction of Ts'ao K'uang-po, a co-operative finance expert and graduate of Nankai Economic Institute. Ts'ao is convinced that a national system of co-op banking is the only thing that can save Indusco, and recently his wife has been complaining that K'uang-po keeps jumping out of bed in the night to work on his inspirations.

According to Ts'ao's plan the Treasury in each depot is responsible for training and supervising co-op accountants, makes loans only after scientific analysis of each co-op's business situation, takes over mortgage loans from the banks to prevent foreclosure, and grants short-term loans on security of goods-in-process, so that the co-ops can buy raw materials just one stage earlier on a rising market. On the Regional scale, the Treasuries



provide clearing-house facilities for trade in co-op goods between the joint sales departments in each depot. At the top, a central C.I.C. Bank sells shares, conducts expert sales talk with the banks, contracts for Government loans, and acts as guarantor for foreign investments.

Only after the closest integration can co-operatives hope to carry through the transition from organized handicraft or semi-mechanized production to modern decentralized industry. And since immediate steps are already necessary for other reasons in the financial field, integration between localities may well begin here in joint banking rather than directly in the industrial function, which will develop automatically as communications become easier after the war.

## VII

It was summer-time when Ts'ao K'uang-po first undertook co-operative insurance from the Indusco Treasury. Almost the day after the first premiums had been paid, the bombing began over Paochi. Day after day for eight days Ts'ao sat quaking in the dug-out, and the manager of the joint Supply and Marketing Department, whose warehouse was covered under Ts'ao's scheme, sat sympathetically by his side. In one day six co-op and C.I.C. buildings were hit, but in each case valuable stores and machinery escaped, and Ts'ao was saved. A building just in front of the Supply and Marketing warehouse was utterly destroyed, with the loss of two sewing-machines, while half a million dollars' worth of co-op produce and raw materials lay unharmed a few yards away. One evening the wind swept a fire from incendiaries down the main street, but only the Indusco restaurant suffered, as the co-ops mostly stood back from the road.

But if the Treasury was saved from imminent disaster, its escape paradoxically put an end to insurance for a time. Many co-ops, having missed destruction after a week's heavy bombing, argued that insurance was unnecessary, and payment on premiums stopped.

The Wangs, a refugee family from Kaifeng, lived in a cave and thought never to fear a raid. Each time the alarm sounded the people who lived in ordinary houses of piled mud bricks, or in shacks of wooden sticks and matting, ran out with their children in their arms to a safe place on the mountains, driving precious

pig or donkey before them. But the Wangs didn't have to go out. They lived on the edge of the city where the wall ran up and enclosed part of the mountain, so that their home was inside the mountain and inside the city too. The neighbours envied them their cave, and the lucky ones in the Wang favour got a place in it for their women and children. The Wangs were only poor refugees, and they were glad to have this one way of repaying kindness.

You would have thought it safe too, wouldn't you? A cave hollowed thirty feet into the mountain-side, with a hundred feet of cliff above it? But a cave can be a trap—if a bomb lands in the cave-mouth. The shrapnel spreads in a barrage and jags the walls in a line all round. And the people whose heads were just that high . . . ? Look down in the dust. The Wang family and the favoured neighbours are sprawling there. The yellow dust is thick over everything. They look as if they've been like that for a hundred years, but flies are crawling in and out of the brain cavities, and on the floor a red puddle is seen through the dust, like water through duckweed. Outside is a dead donkey still harnessed to the grindstone, blindfolded as if ready to go on with his circle.

Every quarter of an hour the men come back for a new body to prepare. They carry it out to the mat and wash it clean. Then there is a new padded gown, for the cold weather will soon be here; and a pair of embroidered shoes with soft soles, better than he ever wore in life.

Over there are two little soap-boxes with new white wood nailed over them. Children inside. And under that piece of old matting, with just a pair of legs showing out from one end? The mother of those legs is so busy crying over her husband—with a little lamp, a plate of cakes and some paper money set on a stool beside his coffin—that she has forgotten all about her small dead daughter.

Farther along the hillside, a cliff has completely collapsed under the weight of an explosion, burying forty women and children who were sheltering in a dug-out. Men cry as they dig frantically into the disintegrated loess, fearful always that they may strike some dead or half-dead thing. An old woman goes silently on her own way from body to body, peering intently at each. She puts out a hand to touch one, that she may see more clearly the disfigured face, and suddenly throws herself down onto the ground beside it, kissing it in an abandonment of grief.

"That's enough, now, old lady, that's enough!" says a man in uniform, trying to pull her to her feet; but the old woman cleaves to her daughter, and he leaves her, to turn to more important matters.

An old man who has been digging for half an hour now discovers that his wife was one of the first to be taken out, dead, and too disfigured for him to recognize.

"Aiya! What an affair! My old woman dead!" He throws down his spade and runs up to me, crazed. I sympathize and he hurries on.

"My old woman's dead!" I hear him call to the next man.

"I know, Old-head," the man replies, not knowing what else to say.

The old man hurries on, white-faced, stopping everybody he meets.

## FRONT LINE IN SHANSI

IN THE SPRING of 1940, when the Japanese occupied Yangcheng in southern Shansi, Liu Hsing, a shoemaker, left the city with \$100 in his pocket and a family of seventeen to look after. He dared not spend the money on leather when food was so scarce, and tried to keep busy with odd cobbling jobs that needed no outlay for materials. Before winter his eldest son had joined a shoemaking co-op, and he himself had built up a fair clientele for his cobbling. But in the meantime six of the family had died from sickness and under-nourishment.

Nor, according to old Liu, could this be considered a bad proportion, for at least 20,000 of the refugees from Yangcheng had died within the first year. I asked him if none of them had considered going back and trying to get a living in the city under the Japanese.

"About five thousand households tried going back," said Liu; "the Japanese invited them to a temple meeting, and then, after they had all come and were waiting for something to happen, fired on them with machine-guns. I knew fifty people myself who went to that meeting and were killed."

Taking this as a warning, the rest of the refugees continued to wander and starve on the countryside, upsetting communications and demoralizing the population, as the Japanese had meant them to. In fact, this was one of three tactical lines along which the Japanese in southern Shansi had been working consistently since 1938:—

- (1) To demoralize the enemy forces by driving systematically and with irresistible strength along previously scheduled routes, destroying everything within sight.

- (2) To cut off the southern industrial district, around Chincheng, Kaoping and Yangcheng, from its market and food supply farther to the north, by running a motor-road blockade line across from the Peiping-Hankow Railroad on the east, to the Tungpu Railway on the west..

- (3) To undermine the people's resistance by driving locust-

*like hordes of refugees out into the devastated countryside, and at the same time switching the onus for famine onto the Chinese authorities themselves.*

Thirteen separate attacks, each with several spearheads, had been driven slowly but surely and with maximum destructiveness along the valley bottoms. Sometimes, as in the spring of 1940, the Chinese were too busy with their own affairs to fight; at others they stood up bravely but with little attempt to adapt their mode of warfare to the terrain. It was only gradually that a new pattern hardened into shape, in which the Japanese drove steadily through and through Chinese territory without stopping for long or leaving the main routes, while the Chinese army units moved their headquarters bodily into the mountains and were not unduly disturbed by the destruction coursing through the valleys.

While some were sitting safely in their mountain quarters, the morale of the front-line officers and troops quickly fell. "Adaptation" to guerilla conditions was carried a stage farther by bringing wives, concubines and theatrical performers up to the front, and supporting them there at great expense. Here the Japanese No. 2 policy (blockade) became of significance, for it indirectly provided a good way of making money to meet these expenses.

The motor-road blockade line had been linked up right across from the Tao-Ching Railway (which juts out from the Peiping-Hankow line above Chengchow) to the Tungpu Railway for the first time in the spring of 1939; but it was thin, and, as I had found, quite easy to cross at night. In any case it was too far north to split the area seriously. The following spring the Japanese took advantage of civil fighting between Yen Hsi-shan's old and new forces to come down a step farther south. With their motor roads now connecting all the major cities in the area, and dividing the territory into economically non-self-sufficient areas, they were able to drain valuable raw materials away and at the same time to push in their own consumer goods. The military action maintaining the blockade caused an economic vacuum which, in turn, could be used as a weapon to undermine Chinese morale. For the trade in consumer goods of which the Chinese population and armies both stood in need had to pass across the front lines, and soon the troops, as self-elected customs guards, were extracting big sums from merchants passing through the lines. From this grew inevitably a trade partnership between army officers and merchants. The final step, since there were many Chinese puppet

troops on the Japanese side, was fraternization, based on sound principles, across the lines themselves.

As army life grew in comfort, the lot of the people became harder. Taxed, unable to carry on their industry or agriculture owing to the general instability, forced to give their sons and their farm animals as carriers for the army and to support a large number of unproductive troops, the peasants left their homes to earn a living in the one way opened up for them—by carrying on their shoulders \$100,000 worth daily (February 1941 figures) of cigarettes, bicycle parts, cloth, kerosene, salt, sea-food, and patent flavourings, from enemy territory and down over the mountains to the Yellow River.

To enhance the effect of their economic and military tactics, the Japanese invented, or copied from Hitler, the technique of refugee warfare. While on the one hand they exercised extreme cruelty against the city populations, driving them out to create a food shortage in the country, they at the same time paid good wages for coolie-labour on their military roads, gave good opportunity for loot to camp followers, and sometimes went out of their way to sell cheap rice to the country people. The onus for slow starvation thus came to be associated in the peasants' minds not so much with the Japanese army, whose everyday relations were careful, as with the Chinese army.

The defending troops, whose very safety depended on co-operation from the people, made forced harvests and bought up grain stores at arbitrary prices. Valuable sources of iron were left idle while the miners starved—and the army continued to bring up its hand-grenades from south of the river. Coal-mines lay deserted—while soldiers were sent out to cut down the few remaining trees, scour the mountain-sides for sticks, and scrape the fields bare of turf and roots for fuel. Thousands of peasants despaired of making a living at all, and, leaving their fields deserted, became carriers of Japanese goods. As agricultural production fell off, the army became dependent on grain supplies carried up from south of the Yellow River, and its mobility suffered accordingly.

Physical resistance was the first to suffer. In the winter of 1940-1941 typhus fever, typhoid, relapsing fever and influenza scourged the weakened population. With far more deadly effect than any direct offensive, before spring these epidemics had liquidated one out of every three civilians, plus an unknown number of soldiers. National resistance was weakened next, when

in May 1941 the Japanese used puppet troops, civilian traitors and blitz tactics to take complete control of the Chungtiao and neighbouring ranges which command the north bank of the Yellow River from Chengchow west to its bend at Tungkwan.

It was in such an environment that guerilla Indusco grew up in the Northern Front Region. Meng Yung-chien, son of a famous Peiping pastor, graduate of Yenching University, industrial secretary in Shanghai for the National Christian Council and later Peiping newspaperman, is perhaps the best economist and the clearest strategist in the movement. Though a quiet man lacking K. M. Lu's flair for action, with a minimum of capital, he yet managed—first as depot master in South Shansi and next as Director of the Northern Front Regional Headquarters in Loyang—to give guerilla industry a base and an organization on which it has since been able to build and rapidly to expand under active front-line battle conditions. In Shansi, Meng was ably backed up by Chu K'ang-chie, an old guerilla hand who fought the Japanese in Manchuria after the Mukden Incident in 1931, and had been fighting them, one way or another, ever since.

When Meng first went north of the Yellow River to organize iron co-ops at Chinch'eng, he found village after village where the miners has been unemployed since their masters fled to safety, leaving the workers without sufficient capital to run the mines themselves. After organizing his first co-ops, Meng returned to see General Wei Lihuang in Loyang. The 1st War Area immediately promised him military protection for a transportation service to bring co-operative iron to the rear. It also signed a contract with C.I.C. in Chinch'eng for large supplies of paper, promising to block the import of Japanese paper and at the same time to extend this blockade to all other Japanese imports, article by article, just as soon as the co-ops could build up sufficient production in each line to supply the army's needs.

But before work could begin on the contract, the Japanese had begun their spring 1940 campaign and occupied Chinch'eng. Indusco was too new there to be able to keep going at full strength. Leaving a skeleton of "plain clothes" co-ops to keep the spot warm, Indusco shifted its concentration westwards to the Yangch'eng district—where, though the city itself had been lost, Chinese troops still occupied the surrounding neighbourhood. Yangch'eng co-ops were at that time already at work out in the countryside, producing uniforms, towels, stockings, shoes, leather

goods, paper and printed matter for the army. These co-ops were joined by the refugee units from Chich'eng, and the two depots combined forces.

One day some members of an iron-smelting co-op came to the C.I.C. office to say that they had been approached privately to re-open for the Japanese on good pay. Immediately a strike movement of iron-miners and smelters was started. To give it economic backing, the unemployed iron-workers were organized into teams to collect silk from both sides of the Japanese blockade line and carry it back to Loyang. Enemy agents, strongly backed with money and soldiers, were at work to get the silk for the Japanese, and the strikers had to lead their silk-bearing donkey-trains over mountain paths by night. With their close knowledge of the country, they were able to get \$120,000 worth of silk down to Loyang with a total working capital of \$10,000; for the people were on their side, and were willing to wait for payment until after sale of their silk in Loyang.

The idea that earning a livelihood should be linked up with a patriotic people's movement soon permeated the whole of Indusco's work in south Shansi. I was walking back over the mountains in the snow with Chu K'ang-chie just before dark one evening when an old woman from the house next door to Chu's office came stumping very carefully up the hill. She stopped on seeing us, and held us up with an imperious wave of her stick.

"Please don't forget," she addressed Chu, "to tell the second daughter-in-law to be very careful with the furniture while I'm away."

As a matter of fact Chu did forget, but the important thing is that the old woman should have looked on him, an outsider, as fit to take part in her family affairs. Chu K'ang-chie himself fully appreciates this. The technique of friendliness is an integral part of his make-up, both because he is naturally a friendly person and because he realizes its importance to any guerilla organization.

"How's your wife?" I heard him open many conversations with small boys. ("It makes them feel big!")

Chu's co-operatives run three primary schools for their own children, the refugees' and the peasants' children in about equal proportions. Teachers are helped by volunteer co-op members; half the expenses are met by the co-ops, half by C.I.C. Judging from the rakish angle of their pigtails and the speed with which pink pant-legs twinkled past our house at 7 a.m. each day, these kids were well pleased with their school. It was never boring for



them, for they never knew when they'd have to pack up books and parade over the mountain to start again in the next valley.

To protect themselves and their children, the Parents' Association—including co-op members and others living over a wide area—had organized its own mutual Intelligence service, which kept both Chu and the parents in touch with fresh developments from all directions. Even the merchants, much-beloved of the Japanese, were not overlooked: a Cook-for-Yourself Restaurant with free sleeping-bunks brought Chu a wealth of information from right within enemy territory.

As it happened, my arrival at the South Shansi depot had been timed exactly right for seeing this organization in action. Crossing the river in February 1941 I had walked half a day to the foot of the Chungtiao Mountains on the western end of the T'ai Hang Range, spent the night in a lonely inn run by an ex-bandit and his three wives (four is the minimum for mah-jongg as well as bridge), and then walked hard for a day and a half into the mountains. As we came out onto the ridge overlooking the depot office only a few miles from Japanese positions, it struck me that, during the whole trip up this usually busy road from the Yellow River, we had seen not a single Chinese soldier or gun.

Two weeks previously this whole district had been evacuated to reinforce the central Honan sector. Chu K'ang-chie, faced with a serious decision, had decided that he was strong enough to stay in Shansi without military protection. He knew that if he cleared out with the co-operatives the people would lose confidence, their Intelligence organization would break down, and they would flee from their homes, leaving fields and farms empty. The Japanese would then easily be able to create an uninhabitable desert by organized looting and burning, and there would be one less base from which to harass them in future.

Since early February, the C.I.C. depot had become the "H.Q." at which news of enemy movements was gathered and sorted, and from which orders to retreat were issued only when necessary. Whenever enemy movements were reported, Chu and one or two others set out with rifles and revolvers to direct evacuation of co-ops lying in the line of advance; if things were quiet they went round encouraging members to keep production going.

As a result of this organization, the only co-op casualties during these three weeks when Japanese marauding parties were free to wander almost as they wished occurred in two flour co-ops which

relied for power on a stream only four miles from a Japanese post, and so had lost mobility. Chu, out on one of his scouting trips, had watched the Japanese enter this village from his vantage point on the hills, and was returning to warn the next village, when he met the chairman of the flour-milling co-op and his son going in the opposite direction. Chu told them what he had seen. "Wait till evening, when the Japanese have gone, before going back," he advised. "You can be of no use to your families now."

Here the story was taken up by Sung Chen-king, the co-op accountant, who had snatched up the co-op books and run out of one end of the village as the Japanese came in the other. A member called K'ung, who was running beside him, had dropped, shot in the leg. Going on alone, Sung also had met the chairman and his son on the hillside, but had been unable to dissuade them from going back to save what they could of their homes. When he himself went back in the evening he found K'ung bayoneted where he had dropped on the road, the village wrecked, everything burned that could not be carried away by *romins* and camp followers, six of the women raped who had been too sick or weak or old to run out of the village. The old chairman himself lay dead in the water under his own water-wheel; his son had disappeared.

These were not the first co-op casualties in the depot. A blacksmith co-op working only three miles from a Japanese post had expelled its first chairman for "desertion in the face of the enemy". Three weeks later the new chairman was shot dead as he ran, after having stayed behind longer than all the rest to hide co-op property.

A shoe co-op of Mohammedan refugees from Yangch'eng had to move its position seven times in fourteen months, losing \$3000 worth of leather. It was struck by the typhus epidemic, which laid every one of its members low and killed the chairman. In one village where this co-op stopped, 200 people out of a total population of 800 died; in another 300 out of 1000; in a third 350 out of 220 households. With four or five funerals going past their door every day and their chairman dead, the men worked on orders and at the same time tended their sick, with the result that before the year was out they had tanned enough of their own leather to make and deliver 3600 pairs of shoes and 4000 belts to the army.

After the evacuation of Yangch'eng, a printer named Wang Ju-chu volunteered to go back to the occupied city and fetch out

fresh supplies of lubricating oil and medicine. He was caught and killed by the Japanese sentry at the city gate.

Huang Jen-ho, a shoemaker from one of the Chinch'eng refugee co-ops, was intercepted as he carried shoe-soles across the blockade line into Chinese territory. A companion said that after seeing the co-op trademark on the goods the Japanese soldier had killed him without further inquiry.

These and other exploits are remembered and talked over by the co-ops during work or at their evening meetings. In front-line industry Work Together becomes a condition of immediate survival for everybody.

*Chen Su-ching, factory girl, left overcrowded Honan for south Shansi with her husband in 1933. After seven years of home life living on her husband's earnings, she formed a co-op with eight of the local villagers and one war refugee from Honan. Her husband, not quite trusting new-fangled ideas, consented to work in the co-op as a hired man without responsibility.*

Less than two months later the Chinese armies had evacuated the district and Japanese marauding parties were at work. The co-op lay close to the front, and there was time to move only part of the machines before enemy soldiers had closed in on three sides. Su-ching got her members out by the one remaining route, and called a meeting to take stock of the situation. It was discovered that a good part of the past two months' products had been saved, and these were sold immediately to the Federation's Supply and Marketing Department. Those looms which they had managed to bring with them were stored in the C.I.C. office.

No troops had as yet reached the co-op, though they had killed more than thirty peasants in a village only a mile away. Su-ching decided that as she had been elected co-op chairwoman it was she who should try to get through and save the rest of the machinery. Her husband and some of the men wanted to go instead, but she said that a woman was more likely to get through than a man. While they stayed behind with the stores, Su-ching and the other women members made three journeys to the co-op, dismantled the looms, dug a hole for the heavy parts, and carried some of the lighter things back. The Japanese who rode past as the women crouched in a ditch beside the road on their last trip home little knew that they were passing so close to three guerilla soldiers.

But front-line Indusco is more than just heroics. The members of the blacksmith co-op whose chairman was killed built up a good business with the Chinese troops, repaid \$150 on their \$500

loan, paid \$80 in shares, and made good profits in spite of frequent anvil-buryings. Eleven members in another smithy co-op even closer to the front put out an average of 2000 nails daily for the army throughout the year and made a small profit for themselves.

A group of twenty-four coal-miners with no loan but \$450 in paid-up shares hews five tons of good coal daily. The mine was ruined by exorbitant taxation before the war. Later, when the tax department had fled and coal became an article in the greatest demand, the bankrupt owner gathered his former workers together into a co-operative; now he digs alongside them in the mine. Members keep a watchman at the pithead to warn them of danger.

Altogether over a million dollars' worth of goods were produced during 1940 by co-ops in south-east Shansi, and in spite of heavy military activity they were able to make sufficient profit to cover losses of property and repay loan instalments. At the beginning of 1941 loan capital held by co-ops in this depot amounted to \$91,240. Total direct war losses for the year were \$4,372, total net profit \$6,267.72, total output \$1,028,172.

## II

On my first morning at the southern Shansi depot I was taken to see the school where the members from co-operatives, forced temporarily to stop work by the Japanese, were filling in the time with study of co-op accountancy and management, democratic practice, history and Chinese. While Japanese guns rumbled from a point only ten miles away the students toted their water from the stream, measured out the millet for breakfast, read the wall newspaper, put up the flag, did morning exercises, rolled back their mattresses and sat down on the floor to class with notebooks on boards across their knees. In the afternoon there was an hour for questions, followed by singing and the regular weekly debate.

The Monday-morning Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Meetings, the debates, the outdoor drill and sing-songs, had made the school an object of curiosity for miles around. Peasants not only came along to see what was going on, but actually took part. A debate on vegetarianism converted several farmers to meat-eating and one from meat-eating to vegetarianism. As a matter of fact the subject was purely academic, for donkeys, and a weedy Indusco pig that the organizers hoped would still be alive to kill on New Year's Day, were the only domestic animals left alive within miles, and the population was living off millet; raw shredded

turnip was considered a luxury dish. The debate on vegetarianism, at a critical time when the Japanese were playing havoc in the villages, had its effect where a more serious subject would have failed. "If the co-op people can waste their time talking such dog-wind," one peasant was heard to remark on his way out, "things can't be so bad, after all."

Walking with Chu for six miles eastwards from depot headquarters, to a valley generally considered to be Womansland, I came to the paper co-op of Old-head Chi. Using raw materials from the hills round about, this co-op has supplied 1400 newspaper-size sheets to the army and the printing co-op every day since July 1939. Net profits for 1940 amounted to \$220; seventy dollars of the members' 50 per cent went in buying new shares, while the rest was sent home to Honan.

Old-head Chi himself is a dirty and delightful old paper-maker of forty years' experience.

"I'm not really at all suited to be co-op chairman," he confided to me behind his hand, as though something should be done about it immediately. "You see, I can't read, and that makes things very difficult."

Last winter some *ronins* broke into the co-op and proceeded to beat up a smarter-looking member, entirely neglecting Old-head Chi. Slighted as well as sympathetic, he fetched out his own savings from a good hiding-place and bought the member's freedom. When the bandits had gone, taking with them the ransom and a week's output of paper, Chairman Chi unearthed some more savings, with which he bought a musket and powder-horn that must have been out of date in the time of the Rochdale Pioneers. This weapon is his great pride, and he proposes to defend the co-op against all comers.

Lots of things still puzzle old Chi. He was greatly surprised, for instance, when it was suggested that his own family should not be allowed to predominate in the co-op; however, he set loyally about finding new members among other refugee families, and counted out his wife, who had up till then been a "sleeping member". Open accounts were another innovation, and meetings at which Old-head Chi had to get up and sing a song or make a speech. But he took all this in good heart as a sign of the times, sent his sons to the training school, and generally tried to keep abreast of what was going on.

"What is a co-op?" I asked him, as he posed with his musket for the picture.

"A co-op," said Old-head, choosing his words carefully, "is food, work, and capital from C.I.C."

"Maybe you would like more capital, so that you could buy a cannon to replace your musket?" asked Chu.

"It goes without saying we'd like the loan," Chi remarked, picking out the food from his beard in a dignified way, "but we wouldn't know how to fire the cannon."

Seventy dollars' worth of Old-head Chi's paper is being bought every day by a printing co-op of fourteen Honan refugees who began work in January 1939 with \$200 in paid shares and a \$1500 loan, of which \$200 has so far been repaid. In the next two years the co-op had to move four times, carrying its two-and-a-half tons of equipment for thirty-five miles over the mountains, and meanwhile supplying the army and Indusco headquarters with textbooks, pamphlets and Japanese anti-war handbills. Three special times are reserved daily for songs, discussions and study. Posted on the dining-room wall I noticed the co-op regulations, fringed with quotations about C.I.C. from Pearl Buck, Rewi Alley and the then Governor of Hong Kong.

In the past, front-line Indusco in southern Shansi was busy settling its own refugee co-operatives, having little time or funds to tackle the problem of giving livelihood to the thousands of unorganized refugees. Before the Battle of Chungtiao in May 1941 this work was just beginning. For every one of the 120 co-operative shoemakers, ten refugee women were needed in home co-ops for the supply of shoe soles, and every loom in the four textile co-ops kept about thirty spinners and winders busy. This is the cheapest and easiest form of productive relief. Domestic "spare-time co-ops" can be organized with hundreds of members, taking the village or district as a unit.

"Small Jen" ("Big Jen" is Jen Chu-ming, founder of Northwest Indusco's Women's Work Department) and "Small Yang", a pair of Hunanese Indusco girl organizers who were sent to Shansi from Paochi, set off with packs on their backs to see what could be done about mobilizing this potential labour force.

It is no use our trying to work from the depot office, as the refugees live about 30 *li* away [Small Jen wrote back to Paochi], so tomorrow we are going over to Hopeik'o to live with the refugees in their homes.

We have lice—but they weren't ours originally; they belonged to the refugees. We are rather frightened about this, as a lot

of people are dying of typhus now. The lice are much more dangerous than the guns. We can hear these every day, as the Devils are only about 20 *li* (7 miles) away. But you needn't worry. We can both run up mountains quite fast now, although Small Yang climbs quickest.

Chu K'ang-chieh opened the last tin of meat for us today. The oil still tastes sweet in our mouths. Please will you send us some dried pork? . . .

Industrial training for refugee boys was also started at about this time near Hsiyie. I visited this once-prosperous market town one winter's afternoon. Typhus and the dislocation of war had closed its warehouses; its greatest merchants were peanut vendors; two-thirds of its houses stood empty, the bath-house had been boarded up, the school was taking an extended vacation. But while the markets were growing moss underfoot and the fields were full of weeds, the puppet show of some wandering minstrels had been holding thousands of people entranced since ten o'clock in the morning.

Two hundred or more children, of whom about seventy turned out to be refugees and orphans, deserted the puppets to follow the yet more curious sight of a foreigner, and we wandered away rather like the Pied Piper and his crew to a temple up on the hillside. Here we found a priest offering raw mutton, noodles and some tasty cookies to the spirits of the place. The children looked hungrier than the gods.

Chu K'ang-chieh took the opportunity to deliver them a ten-minute speech on the need for industrial reconstruction, to which one of the audience very sensibly replied that as they had no chance to be trained, they could hardly be expected to help with reconstruction. Two months later they would have had the chance, for \$25,000 was sent to Loyang from the Philippines and the United States, in answer to my appeal. But meanwhile the Chungtiao battle had made things temporarily impossible.

Behind the Japanese lines many groups of industrial co-ops are working. The group of seven co-operatives producing cloth, pig iron, silk and glass that were left behind on the countryside near Chinch'eng carries on as unostentatiously as possible without any kind of Indusco trade-mark. Dressed as harmless merchants, with no greater care in the world than to sell more Japanese tooth-paste, cigarettes and fountain pens, co-op organizers continue on their rounds, keeping the units in touch with each other and with

Chu's headquarters. Three of these co-ops have actually sent men back over the blockade line to repay loans amounting to \$1700, while another recently smuggled \$1000 worth of its products back to the Supply and Marketing Department near Yangcheng.

The tooth-brush of the Chinese soldier is as indispensable and almost as proverbial as Mr. Chamberlain's umbrella. Since it had to be bought from Japanese territory, it was likewise a symbol of appeasement. Today, co-ops in this region are turning out 100 tooth-brushes daily—100 per cent Chinese, made of pig-bristles with cow-horn handles. A good deal of trouble was encountered at first because the soldiers were unwilling to clean their teeth on black bristles, but this was later overcome by educational methods. Since the cow-horn did not prove entirely satisfactory, a way of fitting the old Shanghai-made handles with new bristles was invented, and soldiers can now bring back their old brushes to be refilled.

### III

When the Japanese struck at southern Shansi for the fourteenth time in May 1941, they had already gained a perfect knowledge of the Chinese positions from merchants and professional spies, and met no opposition from an unarmed and passive population. Cavalry units riding unchecked captured all crossing points on the north bank before anyone south of the Yellow River knew that an attack had commenced. In fact, three military ferries set out from the south bank near Loyang an hour after the opposite shore had fallen into enemy hands, and were promptly captured by enemy horsemen as soon as they touched land.

Having once got between the defending armies and their source of supplies, the Japanese drove spearhead after spearhead in rapid succession—not, as previously, along the valley bottoms, but led by the natives themselves along the winding mountain paths straight to battalion, divisional and army headquarters, whose inmates were promptly captured, killed—and raped. Unofficered and without direction, attacked by low-flying planes, the Chinese soldiers thought of little more than how to get back to the south side of the Yellow River. Literally tens of thousands of them were drowned or swept down by machine-gun fire as they tried to swim it. Meanwhile, back from the river, puppet troops masquerading in Chinese army uniforms marched from hill-top to hill-top waving the white flag of surrender, *roving* looted at will, and Japanese soldiers re-enacted all the horrors of Nanking over



the wide countryside. Hundreds of villages were burned to the ground; the people and the Chinese soldiers realized for the first time, too late, where their common interest lay.

C. P. Chao, C.I.C. depot leader from Yuanchu, brought the first news of co-ops from over the river, which I got from him in Sian. Yuanchu itself had been taken after only one hour's warning. Co-op members meeting in the hills behind the city had buried their belongings in a coal mine and formed a nucleus for action with a C.I.C. staff of four. The first step was to intercept soldiers coming down from the north and warn them of the situation along the river-bank. "Get back into the enemy's rear," Chao advised; "it's no use trying to cross the river, you'll either be shot or drowned." Chao and a friendly officer spent two days in the hills training a motley force of 300 co-op members and soldiers from half a dozen different regiments, and then set out northwards, hoping to make contact with Chu K'angchie near Yangch'eng. But on the second day they were ambushed and overpowered by a party of Japanese regulars. Chao himself was taken a prisoner back to Yuanchu. Later he escaped with the help of one of the co-op members who had remained in Yuanchu to look after their families. It was another month before Chao could cross the river, and in the meantime he was able to get a message through from Chu K'ang-chie.

"All the co-ops up there have had to stop work, and are concentrating on the military job of holding that valley," Chao told me. "It's a place that is bound to be used as a base against the Japanese in future. When our troops come back, they will need production more than ever, and the co-ops can go back to work. But Chu's people may be starved out if we can't get help to them soon.

"The native people over there are organizing themselves now that the regular troops have gone," Chao went on. "Abandoned stores of arms and material have been taken over by village Self-Defence Corps, which are training the farmers and forming an integrated patrol system. Anyone with loot is killed at once. Old-head Chi's son from the paper co-op followed some looters for a whole day and managed to get some of their property back, but on his way home he was mistaken for a looter himself and executed.

"One of our Yuanchu co-op members bumped right into a Japanese soldier as he ran out of the city. He got the rifle away from the soldier, but had no idea how to use it, so he clubbed the Devil over the head with the butt and brought his rifle up into

the mountains. Now he can shoot fine. If only the people had been trained properly and organized to defend their own villages in the first place, Chungtiao might never have been lost."

Several fruitless attempts were made from Loyang to reach Chu K'ang-chie with money, food and medical supplies. No news came back from him. It was not until September, five months after the battle, that a co-op member managed to get through the lines and across the river after having lain low for a time in northern Honan.

"As soon as the Japanese began to come back into the mountains we split into three groups and scattered," he told us. "Everything was very disorganized, and two of the co-ops were robbed by Chinese soldiers. The day after we split up and left our old headquarters in Shup'iko (a hamlet of about fifty souls) two planes came and bombed it. Later a party of Japanese soldiers led by some traitors came over from Hsiyie on a special expedition to the C.I.C. office, and the villagers came to us outside asking us to go farther away, as they were afraid the Japanese would punish them if we were found.

"We didn't dare go to any place where there were buildings, but lived out under some trees. Each of us was allowed one bowl of wheat a day, as we had only a little money, and anyhow the peasants needed all the food they had. We mashed this between stones and cooked it in a brass wash-basin. We were so hungry we couldn't keep our eyelids open.

"Every day Chu K'ang-chie took two or three others with him to reconnoitre for abandoned arms or food stores. They collected a hundred rifles altogether. One day they came back with tins of Japanese fish and packages of rice. We couldn't believe it! Chu had been hiding in a cave from a party of Japanese when a plane came and dropped all this food by parachute into the valley right in front of him. The Japanese soldiers had already disappeared round a corner, and they didn't come back, so all he had to do was to walk down and pick the things up. We had a good feast that night, and next day the girls made silk shirts out of the parachute.

"When the Japanese began to look for us seriously, we decided to leave that place, but Chu could find no good way out. There seemed to be no organized Chinese troops anywhere near. My home was quite close in northern Honan, so I left the others and walked back. As soon as I began eating again I got sick and had to rest for a month."

## YELLOW RIVER FRONT

TICKETS HAD ALREADY been collected, the gas-burner was emitting fumes and pieces of red-hot charcoal, and the engine was in its last stages of warming up when a bumptious neat little woman bustled into the bus station. Catching up the corners of her headcloth into her mouth, she passed her baby up to a friendly soldier, balanced her bundle on the window-sill, clambered up beside it over the wheel, and fell in on us, murmuring apologies. Mother of Three piped up like a virtuous fowl who sees her chicks menaced, while Father, saying not a word, poked at the intruder with his walking-stick. But she was quite unvanquishable. "After all, I'm a mother too, and we're all Chinese, aren't we?" she appealed to the others as she squeezed herself in and held out her arms for the baby.

Leaving the suburbs of Loyang, we turned southwards, down the main highway of Honan. Chicken-feathers flew, pigs scattered like black bullets, tattered red rags tied to sacred trees flapped in our wake. Dogs chased and birds raced us. Cows with tails flying lumbered swiftly out of our way, little pigtailed boys ran down to watch with open mouths as we passed, and little girls in doorways tried to look as if they weren't really afraid. Old men shook their heads ever-wonderingly, old women nudged each other and cackled behind their palms at the obscene sight of men and women piled in heaps like cattle being taken in to market.

Two miles beyond the city an inspector with three red stripes on his cap stopped the bus and demanded that we all get down.

There was a long and awkward silence. "Aiya! But getting down is troublesome!" vouchsafed someone. We demonstrated our good intentions with little heaves and groans, as though we were trying very hard to extricate our legs from the morass. In view of the inspector's red stripes, no one was rude enough to ask him why he could not have posted himself in the bus station and looked at the luggage before we climbed on top of it. Some of the outside passengers, making a great show of public spirit, jumped down, hoping to get a better place in the scramble back on again, and a few of those with good places inside had actually begun to

stand up when the inspector caught the eye of a minor official among the passengers.

"You do like to bother people, don't you?" joked this official.

"Only duty, you know, duty." Stripy rose unctuously up and down on his toes. As though by mutual consent, the inside passengers squeezed back into their places again, while those who had jumped hopefully down sheaked back to their old precarious perches round the edge. The inspector beamed generously through his spectacles and *cheeped* on his little whistle.

By this time the bus had twenty-seven ticket-holders sprawling on top of the luggage inside; ten more people, without tickets, crowded round the driver in front; five lay attached by ropes to the top of the matchboard roof, and another half-dozen were sitting on top of the luggage-rack at the back. The engine, an old Ford, seemed to regard this as an imposition, and the driver stopped it in despair. After a long time he managed to dislodge the six riders from the rear luggage-rack, but the ten other non-ticket-holders in front were made of sterner stuff, and in the end he had to allow them to remain there.

"You'll have to buy tickets at the next stop, though," he said, "and I can't be responsible if anything happens." At this obvious weakening, those who had obediently jumped off the rear made a concerted rush at the bonnet and front mudguards, clinging there tenaciously while the driver whipped up his motor with disgruntled ferocity, crashing over irrigation ditches and all other obstacles to progress as though he were driving a tank. Soon shouts and curses were heard from those who were rolling about helplessly on the roof, which began to crack. With the ceiling visibly giving way above their heads, the packed masses within joined the chorus of those on top and of the outclingers on the bonnet. But the driver took no notice. Prodding with walking-sticks, entreaties, foul curses on the heads of his mother and of his mother's mother only increased his recklessness.

In the centre of the swaying, helpless crowd a very fat man with a white beard struggled to his feet, and, clutching at the side of the bus, made a vain attempt to put his head out of the window before passing up his breakfast. Still standing up above us all, evidently feeling much better, he gave vent to his feelings, while those on whom his first outburst had fallen eyed him indignantly and tried to brush themselves clean.

"What we want is more justice and public morality (*kung-i ho kung-kung tao-teh*)," he roared.

"We *must* have more justice and public morality!" chanted back the crowd.

The cry was taken up delightedly by the various groups of passengers and repeated in harmonious chorus from all parts of the bus, with a gradually calming effect on the driver.

Rich fields of cotton and tobacco, wheat, maize and millet passed down either side of the dusty road. Coming up the road towards Loyang was a steady stream of carts loaded with grain for the army; and gangs of sturdy conscripts marched between the carts. It was to protect this plain—a vast war-chest of man-power and food, and a strategic base giving access to the Szechwan border as well as to Sian—that the Chinese broke the dykes in the summer of 1938 and allowed the Yellow River to flood southwards from Chengchow. The Japanese advance from Kaifeng was effectively blocked, and the rich Honan plain lay protectively encircled on its east as well as its northern front by swift waters.

As the new river rolled turbidly southwards, feeling out a bed for itself through the fields and sunken roads of the plain, the farmers of Honan took their families on their shoulders and played hide-and-seek with the water, wading from hump to hillock as the flood rose first on this side and then on that. By the time the river had once more been confined within two banks, the refugees were wandering away west, where their Honan vigour and will-to-fight-back awakened the sleepier people of Shensi and Kansu. As coolies on the new hinterland roads and railways, as factory hands or co-op members in the new centres of production, they became living evidence to the people of a nation-wide struggle, in which there was to be no quarter asked and none given. In that year of the Taierchwang victory, even their homes and farmlands did not seem too great a sacrifice in the national cause.

Yet it was only a little more than three years later that Chengchow surrendered almost without fighting to a small body of Japanese infantry which had crossed from the north. In the intervening three years the commander of this sector in the corner of new and old rivers had got control of all transport over the river, engaged in trading business in Japanese and Shanghai-made goods from across the lines, and levied what amounted to a 100 per cent tax on all goods brought across for other merchants. By the autumn of 1941 his Intelligence men were crossing the river regularly at 3 p.m. daily, and were in fact his commercial agents.

On the night of October 2, Japanese puppet troops dressed as merchants piled crates of machine-guns disguised as cigarettes

onto the ferries controlled by Sung's army, while other barges taken from peasants on the north bank brought over a nucleus of Japanese officers. By holding a number of bridgeheads with these forces, the Japanese were able to bring over several thousand troops before Sung knew what was happening. Next day the city was under continuous air raid, and by 11 a.m. on the 4th a small band of Japanese troops, supported, as it happened quite unnecessarily, by some parachutists, marched unopposed into the city. The troops bought up quantities of Moon Cakes—once a signal for revolt against Mongol oppressors—and distributed them free to the people throughout the Moon Cake Festival of October 6. Though the Japanese wisely saved Sung's face by retreating from Chengchow, after having stripped it of literally everything movable, they retained an equally strategic point only a few miles away on the south bank of the river, patched up the iron bridge of the Peiping-Hankow Railway well enough to support tanks and motor traffic in case of need, and brought their big guns across to protect the bridgehead.

The economic disorganization which makes this sort of thing possible, and by leaving the army without industrial backing actually encourages it to smuggle enemy products, is evident over this whole area of the northern front. Already in 1940 twenty-three million dollars' worth of enemy goods were entering monthly through Loho, on the border of Honan and Anhwei. Merchants—jolly, bicycling men wearing Shanghai-made felt hats and carrying Japanese thermos flasks over their shoulders—rode back and forth in gangs along the highways, vying with each other as to who could go farthest into Japanese-occupied territory to make his buy. Some went down as far as Wuhu, near Nanking, paying taxes to both armies and to various bandit gangs on their way through. In Chieshou, a trading centre east of Loho, forty-one cooks were employed by the merchant companies to prepare free meals for their customers. The Japanese made the profits and at the same time were able to use this trade as a financial weapon: their policy being to accept payment for goods only in small notes, \$100 bills have been exchanged with these at a growing discount all over Honan and even back into Shensi, since the end of 1940. By spring 1942 the discount in Loyang was about 10 per cent, and it was causing widespread inconvenience.

Beside the economic disorganization there was a social set-up which placed tremendous war-time burdens on the people without political explanation.

The Government schools, offices and new army units that scattered through the countryside soon after the outbreak of war did much to popularize the idea of united resistance. THOSE WITH MONEY GIVE MONEY, THOSE WITH STRENGTH GIVE STRENGTH! ARMY AND PEOPLE CO-OPERATE! PROTECT HOMES, PROTECT LIBERTY! and other similar slogans were painted up on thousands of village walls and temples. But as military stalemate set in after Hankow, as smuggling grew and talk of the United Front became criminal, it became increasingly difficult to convince the sceptical peasantry that both sides of the national orange were being squeezed with equal vigour. The village children still gleefully shouted patriotic songs on their way to school, but the old folks went out to the fields pondering patiently as they had always done: Taxation? Commandeering of carts and animals? Taking away of sons? This has always been so. "Army Wheat", as the new levy was officially styled, soon became "Official Wheat" in the mouths of the peasants—the name used in pre-Republic days for the imperial tribute to Peiping.

North of the Yellow River, where the people had suffered directly from Japanese cruelty in the early days of the war, the guerillas' job of creating army-people co-operation was easier. But here to the south, in countless Honan villages that had never even seen a Japanese plane, much less a Japanese soldier, conscription at the rate of one able-bodied man out of two in each family, two out of three, three out of four and so on, was carried out without any corresponding willingness on the part of the people themselves, while educated people and officials' families were exempt. Tough and sturdy, the people of Honan have always been famous as hard-working coolies and hard-fighting bandits, and since the war the temptation to strip this front-line area of its human resources before the Japanese would do so has been irresistible. From one *hsien* in central Honan with a total population of 368,000, inclusive of women and children, thirty conscripts were taken in 1937, 600-700 in 1938, 10,000 in 1939 and 18,000 in 1940. The following year the stocks of available conscripts were nearly exhausted, and only 4000 were taken, most of whom were over thirty-five or under eighteen years old. Nine out of ten conscripts have not been heard of again by their families. In several parts of the province where I took pains to inquire, I found that the pressure of conscription has resulted in uneconomic splitting up of families and lands. Since the basis for conscription is the number of males in each family, the families divided to

avoid losing so many men members. A law has had to be enforced which makes only pre-war division of families and lands legal.

The wheat and grain taxes are especially burdensome, for the peasants are short-handed and agricultural production is actually dropping off. Travelling down the main highway just south of Loyang, I counted 750 handcarts and 200 ox-carts in the first twenty miles; altogether they were carrying over 650 tons of Army Wheat. Next day, in sixty miles there were 2876 handcarts, 544 ox-carts and twenty pneumatic-tyred mule-carts. Coming back a week later, the line was just as thick. Setting out at midnight to cycle on by moonlight, I found the same procession flowing steadily north, and a continuous stream of empties coming back in the opposite direction. This traffic, described by an American missionary (the Reverend Elliot Aandahl of Tangho, Honan) as "thicker than I found on the Burma Road, though of course less mechanized", has been flowing continuously ever since autumn 1940.

Paid for by the army at a loss to the farmers of \$1200 per picul<sup>1</sup> until June 1941, and a loss of over \$3000 after that date, and transported to Loyang largely at the expense of local taxation, this wheat represents a colossal war contribution from the people of Honan. Simultaneously with the imposition of this completely new tax burden, the real burden of the old taxes has risen by several hundred per cent since the Central Government decided to protect itself from currency depreciation by collecting all taxes in grain. There have been additional levies of wood for defence works, charcoal for army fuel, and of labour. One result of high taxation on farm produce is that the "yeomen" of Honan—the small owner-cultivators, who should have been the staunchest defenders of the soil—have begun to sell their land and even in some cases to offer it free. At the same time, the native textile industries, by which the Honanese have been accustomed to make up for over-population, found a new obstacle in their path when the Chinese customs, driven away from the coastal ports, began to collect tax revenue from the inland trade routes in 1942.

The people have no way of knowing what is happening in the military field. For instance, the first thing that Loyang learned about the Chungtiao battle a few miles away (on the north bank of the Yellow River) was when long lines of officers' families evacuated southwards in commandeered ox-carts. In Cheng-

<sup>1</sup> Picul = c. 133½ lb., but varies locally.



chow, in the one-day interval between the time when the Japanese first crossed the river and that when they appeared in front of the gates, the city was buzzing with conflicting rumours, which were not confirmed or corrected. "‘Ten thousand Japanese have crossed the river, but they’ve all been killed’, was the story most commonly believed," said the Reverend Mr. Terry, an American eye-witness, afterwards. "The first time we knew for sure that something serious was wrong was when the Chinese blew up the electricity works on the night before the Japs came in."

## II

The city of Chenping, in central Honan, lies twenty-five miles west of Nanyang, where the two main highways of the province cross each other. These roads lead northwards to Loyang, southwards to the Han River valley, westwards to Sian, eastwards to the Japanese. It is an extremely strategic position, on which any big campaign for the North-west would hinge; the loss of the Chungtiao Mountains in spring 1941 brought the Japanese northern pincer down to the bank of the Yellow River from Chengchow to Tungkwan; the loss of Nanyang would enable the southern pincer to close up round Loyang in co-ordination with a direct westward drive from the bridgehead at Chengchow. Most experts say that with the fall of Loyang, Sian could not be held.

Chenping *hsien*, in the heart of this strategic area, produces enough foodstuffs to support its population for about nine months of the year; after taxation has been allowed for, enough remains for less than half the year. Domestic industry—wool, cotton, silk, textiles, pottery, vegetable-oil pressing—is the chief means by which the food deficiency is made up and the population stabilized. Of this industry, the production of silk cloth forms by far the most important item. About 18,000 skilled weavers, each needing three or four other members of their families to help them, weave 37,000 bales of silk a month for export into all parts of the North-west.

The silk industry was introduced to Chenping forty years ago by a group of enterprising young men who had learned the craft from natives of Lushan, in a mountainous district to the north. The trade flourished, and many Shanghai merchants came to live in Chenping. These merchants had enough capital to buy raw silk in big quantities from Lushan, and farm it out to the peasants

through their journeymen. When the cloth had been woven the journeymen exchanged it with the peasants, weight-for-weight, for more raw material plus a small wage for their labour.

It was this system, making the peasants utterly dependent on the merchants and putting them at the mercy of market conditions in Shanghai, that was responsible for the growth of banditry in this part of Honan during the following years. In 1927 the silk trade had been so thoroughly destroyed, and the people were in such a desperate condition, that even the bandits, who burned and looted over the countryside and right up to the walls of the city, were poor. The silk merchants themselves had long since gone home to Shanghai.

In that year, P'eng Yu-t'ing, a native of Chenping who had left his home to join the service of General Feng Yuhsiang, received news that his mother was dying, and started back from Kaifeng to see her. But he was held up on the road by bandits and arrived too late. P'eng erected a mat shed over his mother's grave, and was taking up mourning quarters in it when some farmers came to ask his help.

"Lead us against the bandits," they pleaded.

"How can I? I am no soldier," P'eng replied.

"Lead us and we'll follow. Leave your mourning and lead us against these people who rob and burn our homes."

Before the end of 1927 P'eng had trained a force of 100 volunteers and fought at least one successful battle. The gentry and officials of the whole *hsien* asked him to organize military training for all able-bodied men between twenty and forty years old. Batches were taken from each village, drilled, and sent back to their farms; each village had its Self-Defence Corps, joint rallies were held at set intervals, and a small picked force was maintained on a permanent basis.

Two years later the strength of the bandits had been broken, and P'eng began to think about social reconstruction. He held a training-school for rural workers, to which 700 students came. One of his teachers was Yu Lu-hsi, present director of Chinese Industrial Co-operatives in Chenping. Another was Liang Shumin, who later became director of the model *hsien* in Tsouping, Shantung.

P'eng's methods were ruthless but effective. Altogether he fought 130 engagements before the last of the bandits disappeared. If it was reported to him that some bandits had returned to see their families, P'eng lined up all the men of the village

concerned, and personally selected a number for arbitrary execution merely on their looks. It is said that he made few mistakes. He had his own system of spies, and sometimes himself dressed up as a beggar, wandering through the streets to listen to what people were saying about him, as Feng Yu-hsiang used to do in Kaifeng.

The Norwegian missionaries, to whom P'eng often went in search of coffee or of help for his reconstruction schemes, speak of him today as "half-religious", and agree that he had a sincere wish to help the people. His chief enemies after the defeat of the bandits were corrupt officials and local army men. One of his men—a graduate of Whampoa Military Academy called Ning Hsi-ku—was caught and killed by this group, in revenge for which P'eng captured the official *hsien* magistrate of Chenping and executed him. Finally, in March 1933, P'eng himself was assassinated.

P'eng Yu-t'ing's system of "Self-Government" had already saved the countryside and partially restored the silk trade. A Silk Improvement Commission had been set up under local leadership to inspect every bale of silk before it went onto the market. Strict standards were set, and an agreement was made with the merchants that payment should only be made after the silk had gone through the softening process to remove foreign matter. Since nobody could now cheat or add dirt to increase weight, confidence grew, pride in craftsmanship returned, and quality rose to its old level. The world slump and Japanese competition had destroyed foreign demand and the Shanghai market, but new merchants sold "Nanyang silk" into all parts of China. By the outbreak of war in 1937 about three-tenths of the looms were back at work. Two years later the coastal silk districts had been cut off, fresh demand for Chenping silk had taken up the whole slack, and new looms were being built.

Though most of the *hsien*'s administration is now carried on by P'eng's followers in the "Self-Government" system, relations with the Central Government improved steadily after his death, and all orders passed down through the Provincial Government are now faithfully executed, while many of P'eng's old forces have been absorbed into the Central Army. Wheat for the army totalling 4600 tons, and 33,000 conscripts, besides the usual land taxes and other levies, have been collected and handed over by the local "Self-Government" men since 1937.

Evidences of P'eng's practical turn of mind are to be seen

everywhere—even the temple commemorating him is used as a storehouse for the spinning-machines that Self-Defence Corps soldiers use when off duty. Another temple has been turned into a large middle school. A third is used for breeding Angora rabbits and spinning their wool. Pigs and goats in the villages have been cross-bred with prize specimens from Liang Shu-min's experimental farm in Tsouping, and are remarkable for their size. Orchards and poplar trees line good country roads, canals lace the fields, and fish-pools have been dug in many villages. Bee-keeping is increasing. Grain is stored in public granaries and loaned out to the people at cheap rates when times are hard. Industrial co-ops, of which there are twenty-seven working and over fifty others organized waiting for funds, are given every help and encouragement.

The 500 workers in these co-ops are all local men and all peasants, so that C.I.C. has a firm basis here which can be enlarged and built upon with no fear of collapse after the war, when refugee members in other depots may begin to think about going home. Most of the members with whom I spoke in Chenping said that the co-ops were giving them a monthly wage which was just enough to live on, with a narrow margin—not enough to support wife, much less children or parents. Dividends at the end of each year were in addition to this, but owing to undercapitalization, profits and dividends had so far been small.

The function of taking people in over-populated Honan off the land, and supporting them in their homes, is equivalent to putting refugees to work farther in the rear. These are, in fact, the refugees. In Paochi, Sian and all up the plain north of the Wei River, hundreds of thousands of economic refugees from Honan are wandering, driven away from their homes for the simple reason that the land would not produce enough food to go round. The co-ops in Chenping are keeping 500 peasant workers in their home districts, and in this way building up the economic resistance of a strategic war area. If more capital were available—at present monthly production is 25 per cent greater than total loan capital—the membership of Chenping's twenty-seven co-ops would immediately double, while a further fifty co-ops could be formed within a few weeks. With sufficient capital, the co-ops could form their own organization to buy raw materials and sell products, so that the large profits now earned by merchant companies could go to the weavers and their peasant families.

The effect of rising cost of living has been felt very strongly in

these co-ops, where food represents nearly half the total costs of production. Owing to monopolistic combination on the part of the merchants who buy their products from them, the selling price of co-op products has risen far less quickly than the costs of production, so that the main effect of inflation has been to reduce the workers' real earnings. Between the end of 1940 and the end of 1941 the cost of living rose by four times, while the cost of finished silk cloth rose by less than two times. Co-op wages during this period rose on the average 2.7 times, but this does not take the year-end dividends into account.

In many co-ops members draw no wages at all, but receive a food allowance from the co-op and leave the rest in the business. Others have invented a system by which members are credited with their wages, but do not draw them until after seeing whether the co-op finances can stand it at the end of the year. This wage-policy has come spontaneously from the members themselves, and is indicative of their cautious and conservative peasant character.

Peasants, to whom floods, famines, pestilences and oppression are part of life, have many ways of hanging on where others would let go. I visited three vegetable gardens dug in the wasteland after work hours. One co-op declared a week's holiday after harvest time and saved itself hundreds of dollars' worth of winter fuel by collecting unwanted roots from the fields. An old chairman, sixty-two years old, gave up the "luxury" of a meal in the city on his weekly business trips; he turned in an expense account amounting to exactly ten cents for the year. One day I was invited to eat the new "Resistance Loaf" with my dinner. Beneath a shining white exterior it contained a heart of potato. I was told that all co-ops were introducing this as an economy measure. "China is like that loaf," said an organizer; "the Japanese devils push into the middle and then we close round them so they can't get out!"

Chenping co-op organizers have specialized in making members "co-op conscious". When asked in to help over some particularly knotty business problem, the organizer follows up by holding an impromptu class, and asks for members' suggestions. Later, when he has a good idea of the most common difficulties, he may arrange a centralized training class. Each co-op picks a member and gives him two weeks' supply of wheat and potatoes to take in to the training-school, where he learns co-op history, the intricacies of the balance sheet, and a new repertoire of songs.

Here is a story written after one of these classes by the accountant of a cotton textile co-op in Chenping.

### FROM TRADING FIRM TO CO-OP

By HSU PING-KWEN

I am a primary school graduate. Soon after leaving school, because of my youth and inexperience and because my home could not afford to send me to middle school, I went of my own accord into a merchant firm to learn business.

Later, a cousin induced me to join the textile co-op. When I first arrived the Chairman said: "It is very good that you come, as we are just in need of someone to look after the accounts. The group will surely elect you to be accountant."

I saw that the accounts were in quite different form to those of the merchants. I was unable to understand them, so I did not dare agree to his suggestion. But at the General Meeting it was passed unanimously. I objected that I would be unable to carry out my duties properly. "It doesn't matter," they answered, "there is an organizer. After he has explained it to you, you will soon learn."

On the vote of my fellow workers, I thus became the co-op's accountant. Whenever I had time I studied the new style of accounting. At the end of the first month I didn't dare to send in the co-op accounts. After that the organizer came more often. I don't know how many mistakes I made, but at last the account sheet was brought into a more or less clear form.

Not long afterwards I received notice from the depot office that all co-op accountants were wanted in the city for training. Here for the first time I understood thoroughly that the whole principle of co-operation is different to that of the merchants. The merchants do business each day in hook-hearted rivalry. Indusco is for mutual benefit. After ten days the teachers advised us to go back to our co-ops, and, besides putting our accounts into clear shape, to read aloud *Indusco Bulletin* to the other members, and to teach them that the co-op is reasonable for themselves and reasonable in its relations with others.

Each co-op has one member responsible for nightly literacy classes. The C.I.C. organizer goes round at regular intervals and holds examinations. One of the quizzes given to first-year students runs as follows:—

1. Is Dr. H. H. Kung (a) the National Leader of China?  
or (b) the President of C.I.C.?
2. Is C.I.C. a silk-trading firm of merchants?
3. Are C.I.C.'s chief aims (a) to make profits?  
or (b) to resist the Japanese?  
or (c) to help the people?
4. Is the organizer your (a) co-op manager?  
or (b) co-op creditor?  
or (c) co-op helper and friend?

### III

Chenping was bombed so often that the Indusco office had portable desks made, and marched out with these at 5.30 each morning during good bombing weather to work under a clump of willow trees. A single plane came over as we lay under the trees one day.

"Just a scout," said Yu Lu-hsi. But just above our heads it came down in a low dive with a terrific roar and stutter of machine-gun fire. On the second swoop the pilot landed a small bomb just in front of us, and we could see him leaning out to get a good look at what he'd done. In the old days before Nazis were enemies in England, the R.A.F. fighters used to demonstrate on "natives' huts" of brushwood in the airfield at Hendon. I suppose we were just "natives" to the Japanese pilot too. By the time he had come down once more and finished machine-gunning, a peasant's farmhouse was in flames, a lot of cotton had been destroyed, three mules and four mule-men had been killed.

Borrowing a bicycle from a Norwegian missionary, I cycled eighty miles south to Laohokow on the Han River in northern Hupeh. Honan hats of felt and straw gave way suddenly to umbrella-shaped pancakes made of bamboo slivers and tiger-lily leaves. Lumbering black water-buffaloes slushed through the rice-paddies. The paved streets of Laohokow were narrow, over-shadowed by high stone buildings, cluttered with little tables and chairs for tea-drinkers.

I found the Indusco office just sitting down for breakfast at 7 p.m., for the Japanese were pressing up the Han valley, with Laohokow as their immediate objective, and air raids were almost continuous. The only co-op still within the city was a new women's co-op of nine girl students from a co-operative technical school. Having used up their whole loan and share capital to buy equip-

ment and raw materials, they were now living off the pawnbroker until returns began to come in, and unable to risk the loss of business that would be entailed in a removal. They took no shelter when the bombers came, but went right on working. No bombs had dropped very near them, so far, and with he-man bravery, if feminine reasoning, they seemed quite sure that none ever would.

Two days later, as I watched from half a mile away while great petals of grey dust shot up from the city towards a flight of thirty-six bombers, I wondered about that co-op. But there was no time to go back and look. The bicycle had been returned to its owner, and I was now making my retreat with a handcart on ricksha wheels, and a piece of machinery which a man in Paochi had implored me to bring back for him. This, added to my own weight, was too much for the strength of the most rabbit, most freckled, most weedy and bandy-legged little man that ever ran between shafts. A missionary I met along the road said he was an opium addict, but I wouldn't like to say that about him myself . . . not after we became so intimate.

If it hadn't been for the thought of the Japanese on our flank, Bunny would undoubtedly have made no progress at all, and even as it was, he seemed good for only a few miles that day. Something had to be done; rather loth, for the weather was warm, I arranged to take turns with him. He pulled me while I lay flat on the cart with my legs lifted over the machine, then I pulled him while he panted his way back to life and strength in a similar position. The only thing against this was that I got his lice; but this gave me something to do. Typhus no longer had any horrors, and I did not then know that lice carry relapsing fever too.

From his point of view the arrangement was physically all that could be desired, but he feared above all the jeers and sneers of his peers along the road. For this reason he gave me his big wide hat to pull down over my face as I ran, and spread a filthy towel over his own, so that for a time we got on fine as a mystery craft, paying no attention to friendly calls or invitations to pull up and drink a cup of tea.

Catching sight of an old crony sitting in front of a tea-shop, Bunny's faith in the disguise suddenly vanished. "Let me pull now, let me pull! You must be tired! Rest a little!" he shouted, struggling frantically up from the cart. Immediately the whole village turned to stare, and covered us both with confusion by their ribaldry.



We kept on threading our way magically past all other vehicles on the highway. Bunny would never voluntarily relinquish his place, but after pulling what he considered to be a fair distance he wandered discreetly off the road to make water, and always feigned great surprise when he found me waiting between the shafts on his return. It was amazing how easily the cart moved on its rubber tyres. The load is arranged so that the shafts press slightly upwards. As soon as the coolie puts his weight on them it moves forward, and at the same time takes his own weight off his feet, so that on a level road he can average faster than walking pace with very little effort. Going downhill the shafts came up a little farther, and I could put my elbows back on them until only my toes touched the ground and we were skimming along like a perambulating see-saw. As a brake, the shafts had to be pushed farther up still, until a log of wood at the other end of the see-saw scraped along the road at the back.

"Give me a copper to buy some bread, master," called out a little girl skipping along beside me.

"But can't you see I'm the cart-puller? Master's behind there under that towel."

"You're the master." She was not a beggar girl for nothing. "You give me twenty cents." And so I did. Everybody should be happy today.

Out on the road it was sunny and devil-may-care. Mule-men cracked their whips, and the teams of great mules—the one animal in creation that really likes to work—snorted majestically along. Lines of handcarts with furniture and of rickshas with city evacuees trotted by in single file. Donkeys tripped from village to village taking country misses, all dressed in spotted silk trousers and cartwheeled silk smocks, to visit their relations.

For a few moments a wide flight of bombers cast its shadow over us; then we emerged from the ditch like rabbits, to forget them. Five hours later we found Nanyang still in flames. No hotel was left standing, and the inn at which my luggage had been stored was a blackened shell.

Bunny and I went on through the night without stopping, for the Japanese were only a few miles away. Only those with relatives to bury stayed behind, picking out charred sticks by candlelight from the ruins and placing them carefully in coffins, while the rest of the city poured out past them onto the road going north. We could no longer take the main highway, for patrolling planes were machine-gunning all signs of life. We could no longer

take turns at pulling each other on the cart, but together tugged it over hills and streams.

Lying comfortably within the protection of the Fu Niu Mountains about 100 miles south of the Yellow River, Lushan, to which Bunny and I came with our cart on the third day out from Nanyang, will stand as the northernmost stronghold of Indusco's Honan-Hupeh defence line in case the Japanese ever advance along the Lunghai Railway to Loyang. Yuhsien, a sub-depot of Lushan, lies on the edge of the mountains only fifty miles from the river, and will act as a "feeler" or advance post for the mountain chain that stretches down through Lushan, Chenping and Hsich'uan to Laohokow, and across the Han River to Fanghsien.

Each year for centuries 20,000,000,000 or more silk cocoons have been produced in Lushan. But the effects of Japanese competition in the 1930's—and of the world economic crisis—passed through Shanghai to the peasants of Lushan, who had already been working on an almost non-existent profit margin for a decade. At the same time, the destruction of the Chinese old order, and the failure to reach the masses of the country with the new ideals of the Revolution, began to take a delayed effect on Lushan. The standards of silk cloth dropped progressively as peasants tried to cheat the scales by adding dirt, and the yardstick by weaving a coarser cloth. Bandits thrived on the trade routes through the mountains, and isolation grew as trade died. No P'eng Yu-t'ing came to Lushan, though general order improved slightly after 1937.

The five C.I.C. staff members in the Lushan office who came to this shut-in mountain place in 1940 are natives of the most highly industrialized provinces in all China—Liaoning (Manchuria), Shantung (Tsingtao), Kiangsu (Shanghai), Hupeh (Hankow) and Canton. "We had difficulty even making ourselves understood at first, so we had a couple of co-op members drop in each evening to teach us about local history and politics, and to give us lessons in the dialect," one of them told me. The local people took an interest in outsiders who came to them to learn.

On the basis of their discussions with co-op members, the staff published a Chinese Reader for literacy classes, specially designed to appeal to the Lushan people. The co-ops spent one hour every evening studying the book, and alternated this with a study of the co-operative constitution. After the first few lessons,

technicians on their rounds of the co-ops noticed that the weavers were writing out fresh characters on bits of card, and sticking a new one each day into a crack on the loom in front of them as they worked.

HA HA! CO-OP LIFE IS REALLY HAPPY!

GET GOOD HABITS—LEARN TO ENTER UP EACH TRANSACTION IMMEDIATELY IT IS DONE!

BLOOD AT THE FRONT, SWEAT AT THE REAR!

SPEAK FACTUAL WORDS, DO FACTUAL THINGS!

SEE WHO CAN LEARN MOST CHARACTERS THIS WEEK!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT "CO-OP" MEANS?

These were written up on the walls of the women's knitting co-op, whose twelve members and six apprentices, all under twenty years old, form one of the most "revolutionary" co-ops in Lushan. They stop work every afternoon from three to four for classes on literacy, citizenship and singing. In the evening they study the newspaper from Loyang. Each member and apprentice has her own copybook for new characters. The accounts are kept in modern form with only slight help from the organizer by a girl who was illiterate eighteen months ago.

While I was in Lushan the co-ops held a joint meeting to decide what should be done if the military situation became critical. The girls from the woollen co-op took a united stand. "We'll go with you into the mountains! We can be your propaganda corps! We'll sing songs and talk to the people so they won't be afraid of you outsiders!" They seemed to be hoping desperately that the Japanese would come to Lushan. "We're going to be guerillas!" they rushed home to announce to surprised parents after the meeting.

#### IV

Back in Loyang I found Graham Peck parked in the C.I.C. dormitory writing and drawing a sequel to his book *Through China's Wall*. Thinking to please him, Meng Yung-chien had had him share a room with Chin Lang—a young Shanghai artist who had gone inland with one of the student national salvation groups in 1937 and later joined up with C.I.C. to paint co-op workers in action on the northern front. Each evening the two artists were discovered red in the face and bursting with a whole day's

accumulation of unexpressed temperament, for in spite of his big repertoire of Chinese folk songs, Graham's language was hardly equal to the strain of telling Chin Lang exactly what could be improved about his pictures, and Chin Lang was equally frustrated in his attempts to stick up for his views on war-time Chinese art.

Graham's big contribution to the dormitory was a special crock in which to cool boiling water from the kettle. This soon became very popular, and anyone dropping in from the street came straight to the artists' room for a drink of cold water. With the free-and-easy attitude which some people find so delightful in the Chinese, the visitors helped themselves to cigarettes, looked through the drawers for things to eat, read any papers or notebooks they happened to find in the process, nibbled peanuts, breathed over Graham's shoulder to see what he was drawing now, drank a lot of cold water from the crock, forgetting to fill it up again, and went out leaving the door open.

To the author-artist in his toils this kind of thing was very disturbing. One very hot Sunday when the crock had emptied itself miraculously before Graham had even finished his first pint, temperament, and that inbred horror which any nicely brought up Western boy has of open doors, got the better of Graham. Bounding through the open door, he seized the last man out from behind, and manipulated him forcefully through the movement of shutting it.

"You mother's——!" The fellow had been made a puppet of little face. "You crazy foreigner! You turtle's egg! You son of a stinking bitch!"

Graham grinned back, panting and satisfied, while others crowded quickly round to pacify and mediate.

Everybody's nerves were a little on edge these days, for there were frequent raids with very short warning. Coming out from the dug-out one day, we found that both the C.I.C. dormitory and a shoemaking co-op had been utterly destroyed. Complications set in when it was discovered that the manager of the co-op was part owner of an establishment in the red-light district, which had also been bombed, and that in evacuating his co-op to a cave outside the city he had taken twenty of his girls with him for safety. Not only did this have a disturbing effect on work; but each time the air-raid warning sounded the girls collected in a bevy outside the cave, which unfortunately lay on the main route for people running out of the city, and called out to their friends.

The spot, marked plainly with an Indusco Work Together sign, quickly became famous. Further investigation soon unearthed the fact that this manager was also a member of the Green Band, and was using his co-op as a blind for its secret activities. Organizers wound up the co-op's business with all possible haste and propriety.

Loyang's show-piece in the co-op line is a women's co-op. Every night the members spend two hours in study or concert-rehearsal. As a result they can dance a Weaver's Dance, a Wool-Washing Dance, an Anti-Japanese Imperialism Dance, and sing a prodigious number of songs, all of which begin sedately and end in a tongue-twisting screech of speed and excitement. They can, and did frequently until public disapproval decided them that this sort of thing was ahead of the times in Loyang, make a very smart procession down the street with their Work Together banners. They are not in the least afraid of foreign devils, and since United Press's special correspondent Betty Graham went to live with them, they have even picked up a little English, and are beginning to feel that there is no limit to what they may learn in future. They have written their own "Song of the Loyang Woman's Co-operative": "Who says women are useless?" In spite of all this preoccupation, the co-op made a net profit for 1941 of \$3500.

Naturally, dressed in their blue overalls and fresh flowery shirts made of co-op tussah silk from Lushan, they are a popular feature at all social gatherings, where they habitually exhibit a most un-Chinese forwardness by encoring their own numbers without waiting for the audience to request them to do so. The organizer explains that they are still young, and will settle down after another six months.

One fine Sunday afternoon Mrs. P'eng, mother of the prettiest member, found her daughter in the co-op entertaining a delegation from the printing co-op next door with a song-and-dance act. Actually everything was quite decorous, and there was nothing improper about the words of the song:

\*

A bucketful of golden spears  
Is yellow, very yellow.  
Daughters of Hans, unite!  
Protect your homes from the East Sea devils!

But nevertheless, Miss P'eng was whipped smartly off home. And not until the proper conventions had been guaranteed by an-older member, who, though she had learned all the songs and

even took a backstage part in the dances, was forty-fivish, pock-marked and married, was Miss P'eng allowed back again.

Since the decision was taken to stop the Work Together parades, in view of other people's backward ideas, the members have walked down to all public functions in twos and threes. But after arriving at the meeting-hall they can all stand together and make a brave show, and someone is sure to ask them for a song. They sometimes find the speeches puzzling, so the organizer takes her notebook with her and explains them afterwards at evening class.

Last International Women's Day Meeting a law graduate from Edinburgh University opened proceedings with some remarks about a woman's place being in the home. The second speaker was a Kuomintang Party man. "Not only are we men united in our determination to stamp out dangerous thought," he said, "but we want you women to help us." The third speaker, a lady missionary, gave a Bible talk illustrated with large and vividly coloured posters of sinners scorching down to hell. Question time was difficult for the co-op organizer that evening.

One afternoon this organizer took me to call on the mother-in-law of her best literacy student; it was a very spruce old lady who told me how Chang Chi-wei had come to join the co-op.

"You see, my son left her to go to Chungking," she explained, pointing to a picture of a young man in a student's uniform, "and Chi-wei thought it was because she couldn't read like he can and was shy in public. So when I heard of the co-op, I thought it might make her hold her head up again."

But Chi-wei had come back crying after her first day's work. "I have to separate the dirty wool and fetch water!" she sobbed. "What will our neighbours think of me, and what if my husband finds out?"

Later on Chi-wei let the fire get too hot under the rice and broke the pot; she lost her co-op badge; she insulted the others by her superior ways and refusal to sleep on the same bed with them. On each occasion she ran home in tears, and each time her mother-in-law brought her back again.

"Don't be too hard on her," Chang Lao T'ai-t'ai said to the co-op members on one of these occasions. "Next time she doesn't want to carry the water I'll do that myself."

It was two months before Chi-wei settled down. She paid for the cook-pot to be fixed out of her wages and promised to pay half the cost of a new one if the mend didn't hold. Her mother-

in-law bought her a new badge. The co-op's general meeting decided that Chi-wei should sleep on the bed with the others, but that everyone should be more careful about washing their bedding. As a mark of special confidence, Chi-wei was made a member of the work-squad responsible for stepping-up co-op output.

"She holds her head up now." Chang Lao T'ai-t'ai laughed heartily as she went over to the chest and took out four copybooks filled with careful characters. "We haven't told *him* yet," she confided. "Chi-wei is going to write her husband a letter herself soon."

Next door to the women's co-op, in the country quarters to which they evacuated after the Chungtiao crisis, is a printing co-op whose plant and workers were taken over complete from private owners in the autumn of 1940. At that time, thieving of type-metal, equipment and food was rife, the workers were rough and undisciplined, spending most of their nights in the red-light district, and the plant was losing money. During the period immediately after C.I.C. took over, which the workers themselves regarded as merely another change-over in masters, petty thieving increased and there were some big losses of type-metal. Intensive training was undertaken with a view to forming a co-operative, and two organizers went down to live with the workers. Thieving gradually fell off. By the following April, when the co-op was formed, the workers' own food committee was able to add an extra meal daily, to provide better fare, and yet spend less money for the month than had been spent in the previous November. This in spite of the rise in prices.

Taking November 1940, when C.I.C. first took over the plant, as base month—with the index for wages (including food) and for cost of living both = 100—the wage index had risen in April 1941 to 124, while the index for cost of living had risen less, to 119. By August wages had risen to 190, but cost of living had overtaken it and stood at 202. This lag was less in the printing co-op than in other co-ops, and much less than in the average factory workshop in Loyang. The lag increased with the Chengchow scare in October, and slightly diminished again before the end of the year when frightened hoarders put wheat back onto the market; but when the \$17,500 in workers' dividends (50 per cent of total net profits) had been added to wages at the end of the year, the workers' income index stood well above that of the cost of living.

When the co-op was first formed in April 1941, only twenty-five of the workers wanted to become members, and the rest decided to work without responsibility as hired men. By June there were forty-three members. By the beginning of 1942 every man in the plant, including the cook and the cart-pullers, had come in, and total membership stood at seventy. Six other members had been conscripted for the army. Shares had been paid up in proportion, and stood at around \$7000. Net profit earned for the year was \$35,000.

The seventy members are divided into small groups for sleeping, eating and studying. At the end of the week each of these groups holds a Self-Criticism Meeting, the results of which may be brought up before the monthly General Meeting of the co-op. The co-op has compiled and printed its own text-book from Ministry of Education material and from co-operative Indusco publications printed in Loyang and abroad. Teachers are elected from the members. All co-op personnel do physical drill together on the flat threshing-floor outside their row of caves every morning, play handball and learn new workers' dances in the evenings. Members are dressed in uniforms provided by the co-op. \*

As a means of family insurance, the co-op voted in summer 1941 that any member's family which was living in the neighbourhood should receive two bushels of wheat monthly from the co-op. This had later to be modified by a ruling that the families receiving support must be refugees from war areas, not local people. Five thousand dollars was invested in a plot of land on which these families now grow their own food, and a further sum in raw materials for cotton-spinning and knitting among the women.

When in difficulties with wool-carding machines or printing presses, both women's and printing co-ops go off for help to the machinery co-op run by local Honanese not far away. These men are all surnamed Sung, and come from Sung Family Village near Loyang. Forming their co-op in 1940, with \$560 and a loan of \$5000, they immediately spent \$4000 on iron, \$1000 on wheat, and set themselves to construct their own workshop, anvil, furnace, hammers, vises, files, drill and lathe. The lathe was made partly of wood and was bedded in two lengths of railway steel; the drill was fixed up outside on a tree-trunk so as to save workshop space.

Being natives of the Honan countryside, the members had a good idea of what was most needed, and concentrated everything on production of a wool- and cotton-carding machine suitable



for domestic use and driven by donkey-power. This proved a great success, and by September 1941 shares had been increased to \$842, membership from thirteen to seventeen. The manager kept co-op accounts in modern style as shown him by the organizer, with the result that the Bank of China offered to make the co-op a loan of \$20,000 (later withdrawn for reasons of general bank policy).

This manager is sometimes overheard to remark in undertones that democracy won't work, is inefficient, and that one man had better decide. After he had allowed himself to be browbeaten by a customer one day, he was interrupted by a member while he and the chairman were taking time off from the bench to hold a leaders' conference.

"Why aren't you working?" the member walked into the office to ask.

"We are working—with our heads," answered the manager in his most dignified manner.

"Well, if you spend all this time thinking, you ought to be able to handle the customers better."

The members called a special meeting that night to brace up the manager's attention to duty.

At the end of 1941 two things happened: the co-op declared a net profit of \$8500, and it opened a bank account. Some of the dividends were sent home. With the rest, members bought themselves each a yellow uniform with red buttons, and various other things, according to taste. Grey felt hats and shiny walking-canes for the younger ones; for the elders, big round spectacles made of thick crystal, with brass fittings, that could be clipped becomingly against bald or shaven heads by long jointed brass rods ending in small disks.

Nowadays, when it is necessary for someone to place a deposit or draw money for monthly wages, the lucky member whose turn it is dons his canary-coloured uniform, hires himself a ricksha, sits back in it cross-legged like an official, and bowls off to the city bank. As the ride is a couple of miles each way, there is plenty of time for recumbent self-congratulation. "It's only a phase that has to be gone through!" the organizer says to people making fun of his co-op.

With a total net profit of \$70,000 in hand for the year, all co-ops in Loyang subscribed equally to defray the expenses of refreshments for their joint celebration on New Year's Day. The machine co-op members, being peasants, were very well-mannered.

"Please, please, everybody begin eating," they kept saying, politely holding out their palms stiffly at arms' length, in the gesture of invitation they had seen the gentry of Sung Family Village use when entertaining in the restaurant. They also took mental notes on who had eaten more than his money's worth.

"Anyone would have thought that Director Meng Yungchien had never tasted peanuts before!" they told the organizer, going back after the meeting.

## V

Only half the families in Hsi Hou, a village in the mountains south of the Yellow River between Loyang and Chengchow, have enough land to support them over six months of the year, and over one fourth have no land at all. All except the richest families divide their members into four dietary groups so long as the good grain lasts:—

(1) Old men and women, who are also expected to share their titbits with the young children—white flour, vegetables fried in oil or fat.

(2) Men workers in the fields or on the looms—mixed flour, vegetables boiled or fried in oil.

(3) Younger women—black kaoliang or other coarse flour, vegetables raw, mostly turnips or carrots, and soaked in salt water. Any peasant girl who accepts better fare than this is ostracized by the rest of the village women.

After grain stocks are exhausted for the year, diet is reduced uniformly to husk of millet, potato stalks and dried persimmon flour, with a little wheat-flour mixed in for the working males of the family. Moneylending and pawnshops take an interest of 3 per cent per month at the lowest, and the pawn dies after three months. Thirty per cent of the villagers never get out of debt.

Apart from agriculture, the people rely for their livelihood on the cotton industry. Since the war, taxes and prices have risen sharply, and every peasant family has been stripped of all but one of its able-bodied young men. Yet the nearest textile market is ten miles away in Hueikuoehen, so that this one remaining man has to waste most of a whole day each time there is cloth to be sold. The merchants in Hueikuoehen are closely organized. The

first one to open up the peasant's cloth marks it with the price offered, and no other buyer will give more than this for the cloth. Knowing that the peasant has come far and cannot afford to wait, the merchant refuses to buy his cloth at all unless he will take yarn instead of cash in exchange for it, and this at several points above the ordinary market price for yarn. The peasants are scattered and disorganized, and have no way to get fair prices. While they weave on a profit margin of 2 to 3 per cent of the selling price, the merchant who takes their cloth and sells them yarn in exchange makes an immediate profit of 15 per cent on this deal, with additional profits if he takes the cloth farther west to Loyang or Sian. This system of domestic industry, whereby the merchants grow fat and the peasant has to waste the best part of a day and provide himself with the money for his food every time he brings a couple of bales of cloth to market, is universal in Honan and common to most parts of the country.

Through connections in the market town of Hucikuoehen, C.I.C. organizers made contact with the villagers of Hsi Hou in June 1941, with the idea of organizing them to weave army cloth and form their own weavers' guilds which could cut out middle-man's profits.

Two villagers came to the first interview, said little, and went away. Back in the village they sought out Chow Chung-chih, the village school-teacher and its trusted adviser in sicknesses, marriages and dealings with city folk.

Chow Chung-chih himself described their conversation to me as we sat on bales of army cloth in the courtyard of the C.I.C. office in Hsi Hou.

"The villagers were very suspicious at first," he said. "They kept asking me questions:—

" 'Is it just the army trying to make us work for nothing?'

" 'Is it a trick to discover the number of our young men and increase conscription?'

" 'Is it some new kind of tax?'

"As I wasn't very clear in my own mind, I went down to Hucikuoehen next day to meet the new people myself."

As a result of this meeting, Chow became C.I.C.'s representative in Hsi Hou, and general adviser to the organizers and technicians who came to push on the work.

"I made them change their shorts and coloured shirts for long trousers and shirts of native blue or white. Nobody was allowed to wear uniforms. I advised them all to get up before dawn.

Sure enough, the third son of the Chow family, who is the oldest man in the village, came round at cockcrow each morning for the first week to see if the city folk were getting up. When he found that they got up as early as he did himself, he decided that they could mean no harm, and began to spend nearly all his time helping us."

Chow Chung-chih was put in charge of issuing yarn and collecting cloth from the start. "On the first day," he told me, "we gave out all our stocks of yarn and had to waste the next day going in to market for more. On the third day we gave out another 1300 pounds. By that time we had registered sixty-five homes with seventy-four looms.

"Soon we were well known all round the district. We worked on a basis of weight-for-weight exchange of yarn for cloth, plus two dollars in wages per bale (sixty feet by one foot six inches). Besides the wages, the weavers can make about six ounces of yarn for themselves on each bale, as this amount is replaced by starching. On this basis they earn about fifty cents a day more than they could if buying and selling from the merchants. They save time too; instead of having to send a grown man in to market, they can send a child round to our office in the village."

Three months after starting work, Chow and his helpers had registered 569 homes in twenty-two villages around Hsi Hou; they had distributed 37,000 pounds of cotton yarn and taken in 4500 bales of cloth for army uniforms. I asked Chow precisely what the people themselves had got out of this.

"Reckoning that five family members spend their spare moments on each loom," he replied, "2500 people have earned \$9012 in cash and \$10,200 worth of cotton yarn. This is double or treble what they could have got in the old way. Now we are getting ready to organize them into co-operatives—each village with one co-operative—so that they can manage everything themselves."

## VI

North of the Yellow River's bend at Tungkwan lies a strip of lowland about ten miles broad and forty miles long, over which the river flowed until, in quite recent times, the sand and mud which it carried down with it from the north forced up the bottom high enough to push the river itself away farther east. For hundreds of years after this first happened the struggle between the

river and its bed maintained a state of equilibrium expressed in the local adage: "Fifteen years to the east, then fifteen years to the west".

Though the virgin mud of the lowland promised rich harvests, few native Shensi farmers dared settle there, for the reputation of the place, handed down to them by the oldest and wisest, was evil. So it remained to landless famine refugees from the north and east—taller, tougher men who were willing to gamble if only they could eat—to till the soil of the old river-bed. The increasing number of these refugees, the success of their first crops, and the apparent resignation of Old Man Yellow River to his new bed, came to the notice of the authorities in 1929; it was then that this strip of reclaimed river-bed first received its present status as P'ing Min Hsien, or "Ordinary People's County".

Nothing very much was done for the new *hsien*, which was looked on by its neighbours as an unwanted poor relation. Ten years later, when war refugees from the north and east began to cross the river in thousands and Japanese troops were digging in along the opposite bank, the Chinese Government saw the district's tremendous importance as a defence area, and decided to push ahead with its reconstruction.

A new and progressive *hsien* magistrate—himself a war refugee from Shantung—was sent to take charge. New schools were opened in the villages, good roads were built, industry was encouraged. Over 200,000 trees were planted every year. By 1942, 50,000 acres of land were under cultivation, bearing good crops of millet, corn, *kalliang*, beans and peanuts. A population of 27,000 had settled in about ninety villages and hamlets.

Besides tilling the soil, the members of the 6300 Ordinary People's households pressed peanut oil, reared an incredible number of pigs on the peanut waste, sold the pigs' bristles and pork; they dug up several thousand tons of salt every day. They made themselves spinning-wheels and looms on patterns brought by memory from the textile areas of Hopei, Honan and Shantung, and so created a market for native Shensi cotton. New villages, each with its allowance of new trees from the *hsien* Government, sprang up almost every month; in fact, you could tell the age of each village by the height of its treeplings.

In August 1942 the Yellow River took a hand. Following cloudbursts in Chinghai and Kansu Provinces to the north, a huge wave of flood-water travelled the whole length of the river. There was no question this time of "China's Sorrow" changing

her course. It was merely that there was enough water to make two rivers, so that wherever its banks allowed it to do so the river spread out over them. P'ing Min County, which lies ordinarily only a few feet above the water level, was covered for fifteen hours by water ten to twenty feet deep, travelling with force enough to wrench huge lumps of coal from a Shansi mountainside some seventy miles farther north, carry these downstream, and strew hundreds of thousands of tons of them in the mud on the opposite (Shensi) shore. When the water subsided, it was found that not a single bean, ear of grain or any of the peanut crop was saved in the whole of P'ing Min County. All the oil-pressing equipment had been destroyed. All the spinning-wheels and most of the looms had been destroyed or carried away. Two out of the three salt mines had been buried irretrievably. The pigs, being short of leg and unable to climb trees, had nearly all been drowned. Over a thousand oxen, donkeys, and mules had been swept away, so that even the river's gift of two feet of good new mud could not be made use of—there were no animals to pull the ploughs. Houses, built of earthen bricks, had dissolved into their component of Yellow River mud, and the rafter poles had floated away downstream.

Reports and rumours about the flood soon spread westwards. But they were not officially confirmed, and, probably for strategic reasons, a Chungking paper actually took the trouble to deny them. Under these circumstances the American relief people sent nobody to investigate, though they had their representatives in Sian. Puzzled, somewhat pained, the military commander of this section of the front wired K. M. Lu in Paochi asking him to come and see conditions for himself, and then use his good offices in putting forward a plan for productive relief.

A few days later the magistrate of Ordinary People's County and his staff, dressed in motley clothes, met K. M. and me outside the city. "Excuse our appearance," said the magistrate, "we lost most of our clothes in the flood." The city wall was a pile of mud, and most of the houses within it had been washed away. Some of the new stone frontages seemed intact from the street, but their doorways opened onto a wasteland of stumps and wreckage.

As we walked in at the county government's gate, magistrate Wang waved his hand airily towards a pile of rubbish. "My reception room," he remarked, and over in another direction: "Here is the educational department, and the economics research department," indicating heaps of tired clay. A wooden pole had

been placed across from the fork of one tree to that of another. "My two secretaries spent the night up on that perch," he explained; "the accountants were up in that tree over there. The Self-Defence Corps soldiers made a platform in the trees outside their house. In fact, the trees saved everybody."

"Where did you go yourself?"

"I had a ladder placed up against the roof of our new office building, and helped push women and children up it until the roof was full and the water was quite close. Then I climbed over to the north side to watch it come.

"There was a terrific roaring by that time, and a stench of muddy water came up on the wind. Then we could see a white wall (it was just dusk) racing towards us. There was an awful jumble of agonized noises—mules and donkeys braying, oxen mooing, pigs screeching, dogs yapping, women shrieking, children crying and men shouting, trees and timber cracking under the weight of the rocks and coal being trundled along under water. Then the Japs began to open up with their big guns from across the river. They were only covering their own retreat into the mountains, thinking that we might take advantage of a shift in the river to cross; meanwhile we thought they were going to make use of a shift in the river to attack us. Actually, of course, both sides were flooded equally badly; but we didn't know that then. By next morning the water was only a few feet deep, but still running fast; by ten or eleven o'clock we could come down and wade through the mud.

"We were only a small county to begin with, and a poor one," the magistrate concluded his story, "but we were just beginning to look like something after three years' work. Now that's all gone down the river. Two things are left, though, both of them important. One is the trees we planted. The other you'll see tomorrow—the spirit of the people and their will to rebuild."

After supper we paid a visit to the local bath-house, which was opened in our honour for the first time since the flood. Handing round the towels was a small boy called Ho Chihchuin, aged six, whose baby-talk betrayed a strong Shansi accent. He said that his father and mother had been carried away in the flood, and that he didn't know where they were. All he remembered was riding on the back of their ox, and sometimes falling off, though managing to keep hold of its tail, until the current had carried him and the ox right across to this side of the river—from Occupied China to Free.

Next morning the town crier went round with a big gong: "Women who can spin, come to the meeting-place to hear Director Lu Kuang-mien speak on productive relief through co-operatives."

Village headmen had spread the news through the countryside too, so that nearly a thousand women gathered to hear K. M. Lu that morning.

Meanwhile I was out on a bicycle over the mud, and talking to the "ordinary people". Liu Ching-teh, a Shantung war refugee, told me how she had clung to an ox-cart with her whole family.

"We tied the cart to a tree before the water came, but, as our village is a new one, the tree was small, and the flood dragged the tree and the cart away together. I was holding my small baby, but I swallowed so much water that I became unconscious and let him go. My father and husband and two children were all drowned."

"How do you live now?"

"When we can beg anything to eat we still have the greatest difficulty in cooking it. The whole village has only one or two small cooking-pots saved in the mud, so we have to use these in rotation."

The 970 inhabitants of Nan Lu An, the next village I came to, were all refugees from the Honan, Shantung, and Hopei war areas. Only seventeen people had been drowned, owing to the number of strong trees in the village. But forty-three mules and over 2000 pigs had been swept away, and hardly one of the houses was now left standing. One old refugee, whose two sons had been drowned, committed suicide after the flood, as he saw no way of keeping wife and daughter-in-law alive.

"In our village a man is lucky if he gets one meal of *kaoliang* soup a day," I was told. "Over fifty households have gone away west within the past three days to become beggars. If we don't get seeds in within a few weeks, the district won't recover for five years. But if we can once get the grain in we'll have hope enough to stay by it for eight months, whatever happens."

In this village I met an old lady refugee from the Kaifeng dyke-breaking floods of 1938. This latest flood had swept her off the roof of her house clutching her small grandson, buoyed her up in turbulent water that was three parts mud, and deposited her gently ten miles farther down-stream still clasping a live grandson. "I've escaped him twice now," she laughed at the Yellow River. "I'm not afraid of him any more!"



The only signs of former habitation in the next big village, where 800 people had lived until a week or two ago, was one half-wrecked school building and a clump of trees. The mud flats, now already cracked and peeling, stretched down, unbroken save by the lumps of flood-borne coal, to the shore, and seemingly to the foot of the Chungtiao Mountains on the far side of the river. A group of about forty people sat under the trees beside the day's flotsam harvest of coal, now loaded into an ox-cart and wheelbarrows ready to be taken inland for sale.

"What happened when you heard the water coming?" I asked. "Was there time to run?"

"The soldiers left their things and got up to the high land in time, so we could have done the same, really," explained someone. "But we are the people. We have homes, crops, animals to look after. We hoped the flood would not be too big, so we stayed. By the time we could see how high the water was, it was too late—all we could do was to tie ourselves to the trees and wait."

The village headman pointed over to the half-wrecked building. "That was our new school," he said. "Cost us a lot to build. The kids were pleased to go to school again after four years' wandering. Now there's no building and the schoolmaster has gone. No more school for a time yet!"

"What about the children? Did many of them come back?"

"Out of us eight hundred villagers, only three or four were left in the trees when the flood went down. About six hundred others walked back within a few days, and there were lots of children among them, all with queer stories to tell. But when they saw the state of our village they just went right away again to begin begging. Now only these few of us are left here, digging coal. No animals to till the soil with, and no seed. No wood to build houses with, though I do hear that the *hsien* Government is going to allow us seven wooden poles per household, to build new houses with."

An old woman was sitting out all by herself, crying.

"What's she crying about?" asked the headman.

"She just got back here after walking all the way (nearly forty miles) from Tungkwan. Now she finds the village like this and her house under the mud. That's all."

The villagers went through their families, counting casualties on their fingers for me to put down in my notebook.

"The Kao family, seven people and only one left; the Sung family, five people and only one left; the Li family, two out of six

left; the Wang family, one out of five left; the Chu family, two out of six"—and so on.

"I was told that my ox had been found on the flats about ten miles away, soon after the flood," the villager who was my guide told me. "But I didn't go to see. Why not? Because my two children were still missing. There's not much point in looking round for an ox when you can't find your children."

"You don't need to write that down," the headman told me, "we nearly all lost two. Write down the serious things to tell them."

Some women were crying again, and even the little group of children, up to that time very proud of themselves for having survived, looked solemn. I changed the subject.

"How about organizing co-ops for spinning and weaving? That would give you a way of earning money for food."

"If you can give us looms, we will certainly know how to use them. In our old home districts in the east, everyone can weave and spin. After moving here, about thirty-six families in our village had made looms, and more were being built all the time. But now not even one is left, nor any spinning-wheels."

"I've cried so much I just can't cry any more," said a woman with merry wrinkles all round her eyes. "We women have had mass cries and individual cries, and now I can still cry, but no more tears will come. I'm cried dry! So if you'll help us to get looms and earn our own living, we'll be very grateful, I'm sure."

The villagers stood by, sceptical but inclined to be hopeful, while I took a photo of them standing on what had once been their village. Then I went back. The *hsien* magistrate had spread a terrific meal for me, and I am ashamed to say that I ate a lot of it. Although I had seen enough concentrated starvation, misery and destruction to last me for weeks—it was as if the entire Luftwaffe had been diverted for a few hours from London and the Russian front to bomb systematically every village and hamlet in Ordinary People's County—I felt glad and exhilarated, thinking of the talks I had had that day.

Now I knew it. I knew that these were the real people of China, who would remain and rebuild, whatever complicated muddle the round-cheeked, shiny-eyelidded bureaucracy got itself into. I felt refreshed, as though for a long time I had been writing with the thought in my mind. "It isn't really quite like this, but then it might very well have been, and anyway it's no more propaganda than thousands of other things people write these days," until

suddenly today I had woken up to find that it actually *was* like that; and that the people actually were infinitely more heroic, in quite an ordinary sort of way, than I or anyone else had ever made them out to be.

## VII

I cycled back to the railway from P'ing Min Hsien, and got a train back to Paochi, breaking my journey at a small wayside station to meet some old friends.

"Do you remember the temple with the fleas in it? And how you caught them with a piece of soap? And the Japanese prisoners Nishimura and Kawai?" There was a lot of reminiscing that night.

The IIIrd Corps of student dramatists, whom I'd met with the Shansi Dare-to-Dies, was back for a rest after two-and-a-half years on the Shansi front. Since I had last seen them, one of their members had been sent back to the rear with a nervous breakdown, another had died of tuberculosis, and a third, sickening from typhus fever at the time of an attack, had died as he was being carried over the mountains. Now, at their home in a farmhouse on the safe side of the Yellow River, they were writing reports and working up two years' material into new songs and plays.

Chiang Chih-hsia, a red-faced, healthy-looking girl who was one of the Corps' best playwrights, stayed up most of the night helping me translate their report, of which the following are extracts:—

### 1. *Plays*

In two years we have produced twenty plays and performed them to 118,800 people. Plays have to be brief and self-contained, for the programmes are often cut short by emergencies. They must be simple and realistic, for we have no more equipment than we can carry, and costumes are usually limited to what can be borrowed from peasants and soldiers. They must not depend on elaborate lighting effects, since often they are illuminated only by the torches which people bring as tickets-of-entry. Their plot must be close to the daily lives of the audience—perhaps an immediate dramatization of a battle after talking it over with the soldiers, to drive home the point of a victory or the lesson of a defeat.

## 2. *Songs*

The Corps has now 100 songs up to performance standard, of which eighteen were written by our own members. Besides performing, we have held regular singing courses and mass singsongs for the troops.

## 3. *Training*

We have held six training courses in mass educational methods and spiritual mobilization, each from one to three months, with a total of 600 students. Most of these were lower army officers and village leaders. We used our own textbooks, since no others were available, and direct methods wherever possible; after dramatic and singing classes we arranged performances, and after oratory classes we sent the students out on speaking tours. At first the training was looked on as a chore, and no particular use was made of the graduates after their return. By visits to army commanders to explain our purpose, this difficulty was partly overcome.

## 4. *Pictures*

Our two artists have given five exhibitions, also many smaller shows. They have published ten special picture sequences illustrating the occasion of national remembrance days. We have often used their smaller drawings as a means of getting onto talking terms with the village people.

## 5. *Writing*

Besides contributing to army publications, we have started thirty wall newspapers and maintained our own news service with the rear.

## 6. *Daily Living*

From rice and white flour to millet, bean and potato. From twenty horses and heavy baggage in straggling file to a compact column bearing its own packs, rifles, hand-grenades.

If ever we felt like retaining our long-haired intellectualism, hanging onto our old college clothes or leaving our uniforms unbuttoned at the top, we remembered that we had once written "We regard ourself not as intellectuals but as fighters". Self-discipline came first.

Most of us would still have been students but for the war. Wherever possible we now split up into our specialist groups, each with its own tutor. Even at the front each group carried at least one book, and found time for discussions.

As a first condition of good team spirit, the Corps believe it essential that all love questions shall be absolutely open. Their monthly session of "Truth" is not a game with them, but an Accident Insurance Policy.

"Triangle love affairs have broken up a good many of the other student groups," one of them told me. "If we see anything like that developing in the IIIrd Corps we make all three parties come out with their ideas at the next meeting. In that way each one knows where he or she stands, and a lot of trouble is saved."

Written applications for marriage have to be made to the Corps' Executive Committee, which talks the matter over with those concerned and calls a General Meeting. If the whole Corps approves the engagement by a majority vote, it then has to accept responsibility. A week's honeymoon on regular pay is allowed, and the girl gets five months' paid holiday and her nursing expenses at child-birth. Money for this comes from the two dollars per member per month that has been set aside voluntarily ever since the Corps was first organized in Hankow, and out of the pooled income from magazine articles and new songs.

It was Meng Yung-chien's brain-wave that I should bring my own little love problem before the IIIrd Corps for discussion. "They are very experienced in those matters," he said, and went away with a busy twinkle in his eye to collect what he called a discreet group of friends.

When the time came, it turned out that Meng had arranged a General Meeting of the Corps. The room was packed with strange but sympathetic-looking people, including three roguish "little devils". I wanted to rush out, or cover myself up with newspaper like a certain gorilla in the London Zoo, but everyone was very kind. Chiang Chih-hsia introduced the subject by quoting in full a very poor attempt at a love letter which somebody had discovered among someone else's belongings and bruited around in that happy "no-secrets-from-anybody" spirit for which Loyang C.I.C. is famed.

When Chih-hsia had finished, a very tall, motherly girl got up and said, "I think Ho K'e had better tell us what it is that he loves about her; then we shall know his attitude and be able to make suggestions."

What did I love about her? Meng was laughing quietly away to himself beside me. I felt like a new convert to the Oxford Group. I knew what I loved about her all right—the way she laughed right out like a boy; the way she looked me straight in

the eyes and said just what she meant; somehow I loved the way she rang the school bell for the kids to come out into the playground and the way she wiped their snotty noses for them. I loved the conspiratorial squeeze she had given my hand as we patched up a quarrel between a ricksha coolie and his wife, and the way she had looked when . . . Yes, but how could I say all that to them, and in Chinese? Needless to say, the meeting was a hopeless flop, and Meng expressed his great disappointment in my progress.

Tragedy struck at the IIIrd Corps before it could return again to the front. The day after she had finished writing a new play, Chih-hsia fell ill and had to undergo an operation. Though not in itself serious, the doctor was a careless fellow, and after going through so much of the war together, the Corps members under-estimated the danger of sickness. A week later Chih-hsia had died of blood-poisoning.

I looked back in my notebook to the story she had told me that night, after we had finished going through the report.

Seventeen years old when the war broke out, she had run from her home in Hankow with two dollars and a bundle, crossed the Yangtze to Wuchang, and joined the group of students that later formed the IIIrd Corps.

"Why had you to leave us?" her mother wrote.

"Youth must work for the country," replied Chih-hsia.

"If you have a lover I will help you keep it from your father, but come home, come home!" wrote back her distracted mother.

Travelling north with the Corps, she returned after two years in Shansi to Loyang, where her father was now a high official in the Provincial Government. As soon as she opened the door of her home, her mother fell on her neck, crying. "But Father," said Chih-hsia, "just gave one peek up at me and turned over on the couch with his face to the wall.

"Next day he called me into his room, talked about the family tradition, said that 'the stage' was a dangerous place for young girls. After that he trained me for a week in etiquette, made me change my uniform for a gown, scolded me for leaving peanut shells over the floor. Then he gave me a collection of Su Tung-po's works.

" 'This is better than any of your modern stuff!' he said.

" 'But, my Father, I can't understand its language.'

" 'I'll teach you. We'll read some Lu Hsun too—some of his things aren't bad.' "

After a week of this she ran away, back to the team to finish writing her play.

I happened to have seen her with her small brother in front of Loyang Station. He had followed her there, and was tugging silently at her hand, with pleading and adoration in his face. And she was laughing into his eyes, half wanting to go back, wholly wanting not to disappoint him. They hadn't noticed me or anything else around them, standing there like that.

## CHAPTER VI

### A PROBLEM PROVINCE

**K**ANSU IS THE problem province of the North-west. With one end in Shensi and Szechwan, it thrusts out like a great dumb-bell into Chinghai, Mongolia and Turkestan. From the north came Russian trucks, planes, gasoline, ammunition, guns, and the Russian advisers. Six counties in the south-east are controlled by the Chinese Communists. The province simmers with racial overtones of feeling between Han and Mohammedan, boiling over on occasion into bloody massacres; while Turkis, Tibetans and Mongolians form appreciable minority problems. Communications are vital: across Kansu from west to east runs the Yellow River, and down it from north to south the International Highway.

Little fuss has been made by the Chinese of this North-western Highway, which runs through Kansu and Sinkiang to a branch of the Trans-Siberian Railway within sixty miles of the border. There have been no news flashes, as with the Burma Road in the south, of so-many hundreds of trucks dashing across the desert from Hami to Lanchow, and of the Government's intention to keep the road open at all costs.

Nevertheless, in spite of the veil of secrecy cast over it, the North-west International Highway is vitally important both in fact and potentiality. During 1938-1939 large quantities of ammunition and supplies came steadily through, probably for a long time averaging as much as eighty tons daily. Massive Russian six- and eight-wheelers became a common sight on the roads all the way from Lanchow to Chungking, and until the Chinese could set up their own transportation system, Russian drivers took these trucks right through. Russian road-signs and guest-houses lined the road. At the same time, thousands of mule-carts and tens of thousands of camels were mobilized to bring down airplane parts, gasoline and less important supplies, and to take back the wool, fur skins, tea and wood-oil that were the main items on the Chinese side of the barter agreements.

This period, up to the end of 1939, probably coincided with the time of maximum Russian influence in China proper. In Lanchow, the provincial capital of Kansu, there were, besides a good



number of Soviet airmen and military advisers, many commercial attachés to manage the receiving end of the barter business. The city blossomed out with a galaxy of Russian advertisements for watches, silk stockings and clothing; Russian language night-schools were attended by hundreds, and U.S.S.R. pictorial magazines appeared in the libraries.

Meanwhile, owing to the presence of the Russians and to the passage of military supplies, a number of new restrictions were imposed on foreigners visiting or living in Lanchow, with the perverse result that a good deal of unwelcome attention and suspicion was aroused. Articles from the pens of visiting reporters harped on the Russian aviators, the Russian signs and even the number of doors with the character "Communist" painted on them, until someone pointed out that the character was really a similar character meaning "well", or water for the fire brigade. While some missionaries admitted that the restrictions on their movements were probably imposed because the Government wanted to restrict those of the Russians and could not very well discriminate, the majority were inclined to ascribe everything to the un-Godly influence of Communism.

Three things enabled the Chinese Government to check the infiltration of Russian influence during 1940. First was the diminished flow of supplies themselves: Russia decided temporarily to cut down her aid to China, either for diplomatic reasons or to reserve military resources for possible action of her own on the western front. The flow of goods coming down the International Highway fell off steadily, and during the autumn I walked along it for days without seeing anything more than the ordinary merchandise that has been going to and fro along this route ever since Marco Polo's time.

The second factor was the successful training of a large number of Chinese truck-drivers and mechanics, obviating the need for Russian drivers to cross the border into China proper. And the third was the opening up of oil-wells in northern Kansu, with promise of independence from Russian supplies for all Chinese transport in the North-west. The strength of the Chinese determination to keep clear of Russian influence may be judged from the fact that the entire equipment for boring, distilling and piping had been brought up with immense labour and rivers of precious gasoline from Yunnan in the south, rather than allow the Russians to supply it from over the border.

With these three factors all favourable, and with Anglo-

American support the more necessary as Russian supplies fell off, the Government risked giving offence to the Russians by doing whatever it could to obliterate all evidence of outside influence in Kansu. The main barter station and truck take-over station were pushed back to the Sinkiang border. All Russian writing (and incidentally English too) was removed from the street and store signs, and the guest-houses were moved into less conspicuous places.

The stiffening of the democratic front following the Battle of Britain and the definite shaping up of Anglo-American aid to China coincided with a fresh burst of help from Soviet Russia. A large consignment of military supplies was sent through at the end of 1940.

Events moved swiftly. The January drive against the New Fourth Army resulted immediately in a group of thirty-two Russian aviators being sent home from Chungking. This party flew to Sian and then took to the highway. On their way northwards they must have passed the long trains of motor-trucks carrying hundreds of big guns southwards—guns taken from Poland by the Soviet troops and transported right across Russia into Sinkiang. By the time that the Soviet-Japanese pact had freed Japanese troops from Manchuria for action farther south, the guns from Russia were going eastwards down the Han River and the Lunghai Railway to boost the defences of the North-west against these very troops.

Where the motor road runs under a steep mountain, west of Lanchow, lives a scholarly old gentleman named Chin Shu-jen, who began and is ending his life as a gardener. When I called to see him, I took with me in my pocket a magazine article and its accompanying photographs captioned "The People of Sinkiang Celebrate the Overthrow of a Tyrant". The "tyrant" was Chin Shu-jen, but I didn't show him the pictures.

"When Governor Yang of Sinkiang first sent for me to join him," Chin Shu-jen told me, "I twice refused to go. On the third occasion he added the taunt that I was afraid to leave my quiet country life for that dangerous region, and I could refuse him no longer."

Yet this man, who went with such half-hearted enthusiasm, was afterwards faced with the job of ruling a mixed and periodically ungovernable people, in the face of active foreign interest and without much support from his home Government. His method was that traditional one of the old Chinese Empire—to play the

subject races of Turkis, Ouighurs, Salars, Hasirs, Tibetans, and a dozen others, against each other. He was not even a first-rate intriguer, brought no new ideas to the job, and probably spent his time longing for home.

In the end he was pushed out by his modern-trained Chief of Staff, Sheng Shih-tsai, a ruthless North-easterner who was determined to stop at nothing in the establishment of a strong and progressive government. One day, in April 1932, Chin found himself faced on the one side by Sheng Shih-tsai with 50,000 troops evacuated from Manchuria in 1931 and repatriated through Russia, and on the other by a Mohammedan uprising under Ma Chung-ying which threatened to involve him with seventy to eighty per cent of his population. The Central Government, busy fighting the Red Army, could afford him no help; leaving Sheng to defeat Ma with the help of Russian planes, Chin fled to Nanking, where he was received with scant sympathy and thrown into jail. Today he is back with his cabbages and his curios, while the Sinkiang from which he fled becomes a bigger and bigger question mark.

Lanchow itself is full of travellers. Up on the hill lives a Mongolian prince: The Y.M.C.A. secretary would feel very much at home in Nashville, Tennessee, while his assistant comes from the Philippines. There is a home for lepers, from Tibet and the northern part of Kansu, started by an English missionary who invited one leprous beggar to stay on his compound; and then another, and another, until today scores have wandered in from the northern wastes to spend their last days peacefully chatting in husky whispers, grinding their own flour and beans for their milk, listening to Bible stories, and looking down at the eternal waters of the Yellow River swirling away into the distance. Ouighur women with long veils of bright-coloured stuff round their faces bring a touch of India to one quarter of the city. Outside the wall lives a German Jew, who was three years in Dachau Concentration Camp and escaped just before the war through the Balkans and Russia to the only country in the world that would grant him a residence visa. There are always a couple of foreign journalists trying vainly for permission to go north. Two years ago there was an American "ornithologist" who searched diligently for green-eared pheasants until the special police took him firmly back to Chungking. And on my last trip I met a couple of young Americans who had crossed the Bering Straits in an Eskimo canoe of sealskin, and made their way, through adventures that would do

credit to Hollywood, for 5000 miles overland to Turkestan and Lanchow. There are bargemen who have come down on inflated sheepskins from Kokonor, and camel-men from the gravelly wastes of Mongolia. There is a Cantonese restaurant serving tropical dainties.

Other interesting immigrants to Lanchow have been a flock of American sheep. Ten years ago, Mr. R. T. Moyer of Oberlin-in-Shansi brought some Rambouillet sheep with him from the States. At the outbreak of hostilities with Japan he was holidaying on the coast. What would happen to his precious flock in Taiku? As Moyer anxiously scanned the daily papers for news of the Shansi campaign, his shepherd, having no desire to be fleeced himself or see his good sheep made into mutton, was scanning the horizon for the Japanese as he took off with his flock into the mountains. By Christmas morning they had crossed the Yellow River and were bleating into their 420th mile when they happened upon the good missionary Bryan of Sanyuan, who, as he put it later, "felt it was so nice to meet a shepherd watching his flock and asking for the mission on Christmas morning". Touched, Bryan gave them royal winter quarters and put them onto the bus for Lanchow as soon as the warm weather came.

Experts then got busy crossing the American rams with fifty Chinese sheep. Though they and the rams were considerably stymied by the short stature and very thick tails of the sheep, the first Eurasian lamb recently rewarded their efforts.

Not only sheep have settled down and begotten families in Lanchow. Last January I was taken to a wedding. The bridegroom had once been a refugee from the war areas in Shantung, while the bride was a local girl. The wedding carpet was part of the 10,000 yards of army blanket put out that winter by the joint efforts of bride, bridegroom and other members of their co-operative. From the wedding speeches I learned that this was the sixteenth Lanchow "Work Together" marriage in the year; and since most of the girls were natives and the men immigrants, it seems clear that the local parent body put some faith in the future of industrial co-operation.

Co-op blanket-weaving in Lanchow is the concern not only of eleven weaving co-ops, all of whom are well on their way to financial independence, but of a widespread organization that embraces 450 members of women's spinning co-ops, and about 10,000 domestic women wool-spinners.

Twenty miles down the frozen shores of the Yellow River from

Lanchow I saw curious evidence of farmers turned industrialists : spread out over a field to dry in the sun was an acre of wool, and sitting squat in the middle of it was a watchman's hut made of grey army blankets.

Bombing had driven four blanket co-ops out of Lanchow to this village down the river, and in the process saved the whole district from hunger during the following winter. With hundreds of homesteads busy spinning wool during the idle winter months, the people were able to make both ends meet in spite of a blight on their crops. Banditry, which had regularly reflected the district's extreme poverty at this time of year, did not occur. A club-room was started for the workers, with picture magazines and games. A consumers' co-operative store saved villagers a lot of time by offering them city goods at city prices right in their own street. The village temple, built in happier times and now long deserted, resounded with the click-clack of blanket looms, and chilly idols, whose paint had been peeling off in the four winds, were swathed in winter woollies.

A refugee orphan lad, star carpet-maker and blanket-weaver in the village, last year for the first time earned himself a good lump sum over his wages. A local girl, once an apprentice at wool-spinning, had learned from a friendly refugee co-op member to weave cloth; her dividend, after she was made a member of the co-op, came in as a dowry, for at New Year's time she was marrying a member from a neighbouring co-op. Now she and her husband live in their own home, go out to work at their respective co-ops each day, earn their own wages :—

Equal, democratic as fellow workers,  
With none to oppress and none to exploit us,

as the co-op song goes.

Returning to Lanchow, I took a baby raft of shiny yellow sheepskins across the river. On supple two-inch sticks tied over thirteen sheepskin balloons, we floated off from the hard ice and pushed out into the little tinkling lumps of it floating swiftly downstream. The paddler knelt athwart his craft, and gradually, spinning round in every eddy, worked it cross-current until we could land a mile downstream on the far side.

Walking up under the shadow of a vast irrigation wheel that in summer lifts the water in little troughs and pours it neatly into a runway fifty feet above the river's level, we came to a Moham-medan fur co-op that had opened in 1939, after a Lanchow *ahung*

came to Indusco and asked that fifteen of his Believers then working as private factory hands might be allowed to form a co-operative of their own. As we walked in at the gate, we could see that the co-op was almost literally smothered under an order from the military for 35,000 fur coats, the raw materials for which had just come in. This order had helped them to pay for their new buildings, and a net profit of \$7,004.25 had been earned for the year.

Next door to the Mohammedans was a leather-tanning co-op whose members from Honan, Shansi, Shensi, Hopei and Kansu join the Mohammedans and two textile co-operatives for night-school three times a week. Each month this co-op produced \$10,000 worth of leather, much less than enough to meet the demand, and during my short visit I saw several representatives from tailoring co-ops and from private factories coming in to place or collect orders. Loan is \$65,000, paid shares \$836.50, but in spite of this comparatively good capital sum the co-op was losing money until May 1940, when a drastic reorganization took place, and half a dozen un-co-operative members left. This meant that only five of the original members remained; thirteen former hired workers who had previously been very suspicious of the co-op were now willing to join, and proved to be loyal fellow-members. Regular co-op meetings were held twice a month, and by the end of the year the old debt had been paid off, while a net profit of \$1800 was earned.

The minutes-book of this co-op recorded :—

The manager shall fix each month's expected output according to the time of year and raw materials available; if the workers exceed this standard an immediate bonus will be paid accordingly, and if they fall short the wages shall all be correspondingly cut.

The improvement in business of this co-op shown as a direct result of organizational changes bringing it into closer line with co-operative principles, has been duplicated in four or five other Lanchow co-ops. In October 1940 three foreman-minded members left the machine co-op while six former hired workmen without education became members. Monthly wages were immediately cut by ten dollars (*i.e.* about 10 per cent); raw materials were bought more cheaply through the joint Supply and Marketing Department; a checking system was introduced by which each workman had to account for the raw materials he

used, and all materials and goods-in-process were checked and stored for the night by the co-op treasurer, who was responsible to the director's committee. Co-operative team-spirit, encouraged by regular meetings, was ensured after the members' united front had won a victory over an evil-wisher who tried to break up the co-op.

The net result was that in three months a previous debt of \$420 had been paid off and a profit of \$460 earned. At the New Year's meeting, after mapping out the year's production programme to cover new mechanical equipment for their own and other Lanchow machine shops, the members voted themselves a monthly wage just 60 per cent of what they could be earning in outside machine shops, as a proof of their loyalty to the co-op and their faith in its future.

The Lanchow co-operatives have started their joint career with a Federation, which runs a weekly newspaper, keeps co-ops' savings and invests their reserves, plans raw-material supplies, runs four clubs with various educational activities, arranges for the local health authorities to visit co-operative groups for medical and sanitary work. Funds for this come from the 10 per cent of all co-op profits set aside for a Common Good funds and from a small initial C.I.C. loan. Chairman of the Federation is Wei Yu-lin, a Shensi man of great natural friendliness and dignity, who was elected to the post from one of the blanket co-ops. Wei is only semi-literate, but has a good flair for conducting meetings. Before each occasion he has a friend write out the Agenda in very large and simple characters, and reads it off a fluttering scroll with great impressiveness.

Bouncing comfortably southwards on some of the 400 tons of wool sent down for blanket co-operatives in Shensi and southern Kansu during the winter, I came after three days to the city of Tien-shui. As our ancient Chevrolet crossed the last bridge of creaking inflated pig-skins before the city, the tyre that had been half flat when we set off in the morning was still half flat, there had been thirty-seven stops for minor repairs, and the gas tank, which had begun the day modestly under the front seat, was suspended flamboyantly from the roof in order to give the added flip of gravity to the motor's failing powers of suction. But the city seemed to resent even this degree of mechanization, for we were asked to leave our truck at the new bus station that lies outside the city wall.

Once within the gates, the traveller is taken back a thousand

years. A long, dusty main street squeezes itself through ten narrow gateways in two miles, and down it pad only lordly camel-trains bearing salt from Kokonor, wool from Mongolia or dried fruits from Sinkiang. Bazaars line the street on either side. A black-bearded son of Allah dressed in a sheepskin gown sits toasting his feet on a platter of charcoal, his walls hung thick with skins of tiger, leopard, wolf and fox, smeared with ancient poison in the forests. Next door to the furrier the sun glints in over the polished tops of black lacquer furniture, while farther on again sits the herbist doctor beside his weird potions of mountain roots, crabs, tusks, tortoises and unmentionable anatomical portions of rare beasts.

But though Tienshui changes slowly in the eyes of an outsider, things are moving swiftly when seen in the perspective of its forty centuries. In the temple commemorating the birthplace of one of the Empire's earliest kings are now housed soldiers who have been crippled in defence of the Republic. And those of them who can still work have formed themselves into a machine co-op making all sorts of technical equipment.

Another temple, dedicated to the women's goddess Kuan Yin, nestles into a hillside beyond the city wall. Expectant mothers hopefully lay images of male babies here, maidens come to pray for the safety of their soldiering sweethearts, dutiful children seek health for their sick mothers, while in a side-temple whirrs the only printing-press for miles round, turning out everything from visiting-cards to school-books and army field maps. The printers themselves are co-op members, and the printers' devils are probationary members, of whom five were recently promoted to full membership. Partly to keep on good standing with the local population and partly in the form of rent, one co-op member regularly joins the other pilgrims to the temple on the first and fifteenth of the month, contributing the press's pew-rent in joss-sticks and coins of silver paper.

Next door to the temple are a couple of caves which the co-op has turned into a primary school.

"We needed a way of getting onto good terms with our neighbours," these Honan printers explained to me, "and besides, our job gives us a direct interest in raising the literacy standard of the people."

Teaching hours were shared out among the members themselves, and in its first two months the school had enrolled eighteen children. Every evening co-op members and about twenty adult



inhabitants of the temple's village spend an hour together, reading alternately from classical story-books and Indusco pamphlets.

The printers get their paper from another co-op down by the river, which makes it by hand from a mixture of shrub bark and old sandals. Chairman of this co-op is a returned student from Tokyo and a refugee from Japanese-occupied Taiyuan.

"Why didn't you stay in Taiyuan," I asked, "and run your paper factory there?"

"I wouldn't have been allowed to run any paper factory," he replied. "The Japanese keep track of all their old students, and I would have had to become one of their puppet officials for sure!" So the technician left his factory and reverted to a thousand-year-old process—"For the present," as he says hopefully, "until we can get this place mechanized."

First step towards mechanization of Tienshui's industry was taken by a group of flour-millers refugeeing from the lower Yangtze district. They couldn't reproduce the steel rollers or electric power-plant of their old mill in Tienshui, but they were able to get hold of a truck-motor, which they converted to burn charcoal and used to drive a couple of old-style grindstones day and night, at three or four times the record speed of any Kansu donkey.

Members of the Tienshui stocking co-op, like their fellow stocking-makers in Paochi, are also members of an indigenous Chinese Christian sect called "The True Church of Jesus", which maintains its own missionaries in Japan, Honolulu and the South Seas. They are good workers, and their natural concern with moral questions has led them to thrash out their own special regulations:--

*Working Conditions.* The co-op shall take three rest-days a month, working ten hours a day in summer and eight hours in winter. No one under twelve shall work in the co-op, and those under sixteen shall be given light work. There shall be evening classes for everyone to attend. Mothers shall be given six weeks' paid holiday at childbirth. All salaries must be drawn at the month's end, and no borrowing from the co-op shall be allowed. No co-op property shall be taken outside.

*Behaviour.* Praise shall be given publicly to anyone who works for three months without absence, reports on the misconduct of others, shows exemplary conduct himself, or has a lot of new ideas for the co-op's improvement.

A warning shall be given to those who are found leaving early or coming late to work, working slowly, spoiling tools, drinking wine or sleeping in the workshop.

A heavy warning shall be given to anyone disobeying co-op orders, quarrelling, getting drunk, leaving for three days without permission, doing his own business with co-op property, stealing below three dollars.

Expulsion shall be the penalty for anyone who smokes opium, contracts venereal disease, fights, or steals over three dollars.

The control of working hours must always be a matter of great importance to the efficiency of small self-disciplined units. Another Tienshui co-op composed of Kansu men ruled in the meeting that :---

Three holidays shall be allowed for returning home each year, each holiday being for a maximum time of three days. There shall be a further twenty days' vacation at New Year's time. Members on sick leave can be paid regular wages for one month. Any other leave shall be attended by corresponding suspension of wages; anyone who takes leave without permission shall be fined double his wages over the period of his absence.

The setting up of a machine-shop in 1939, though adding enormously to the strength of co-op enterprise in Tienshui, had to be balanced against a loss in terms of co-operative principle. Machinery is rare as diamonds in Kansu, and C.I.C. was lucky to get an option on some good lathes; but the only man who seemed likely to be able to run a machine-shop was a former officer with a reputation for selfishness and ruthless dealing. This man subsequently became the co-operative chairman, and a running struggle ensued between him and the C.I.C. office, the effect of which was almost enough to cancel out the technical advantage gained by having a machine-shop in the Tienshui co-op family. Up to the very last, the chairman refused to admit more than four members, or to allow inspection of his books; things finally came to a head when he tried to sell his machines to a third party and pocket the appreciation in their value for himself.

Was this a fatal precedent? Did it mean that every co-op would cash in on appreciated values to sell its equipment, repay its old loan, and walk off with the difference? Could we get a new law

introduced to prevent this?—These questions were being mooted around in the Indusco office last January.

But the answer was of a different kind, involving the very structure of Indusco. *If* the machine-shop had been a truly democratic body whose thirty or forty workers had been members instead of hired men, nobody would have wanted to sell the equipment. Their freedom would have meant more to them than that, and in any case the cut among so many men would have been too small an incentive.

In the mechanically virgin North-west, anyone with a bit of machinery is in a monopoly position, and consequently "pure" co-operative principle has more than once had to be sacrificed to technical advance. The Tienshui case therefore came as an apt warning: to decentralized industry, *democracy is a safeguard*.

Fortunately this case was peaceably settled, since the machine had been bought from the chairman on behalf of crippled soldiers, who were pleased with the idea of forming a real co-operative themselves. The machines remained within the Indusco set-up, ready to service Tienshui's thirty-one other co-operatives.

To meet and to match the growth of industry in Kansu, rails torn up from the Lungshai Railway in the path of the Japanese are now being relaid 1000 miles inland, as the railway extends north-westwards over the gorges and through the peaks of the Tsingling. Tienshui is already preparing its railway station right outside the city wall; and when one remembers that only a few decades ago Cambridge University refused to have a railway come within miles of its precincts, one gets the true impact of progress here, where a great emperor was born more than 2000 years before Christ.

A day's bicycle trip north of Tienshui lies Chingan, famous for its textiles. While the women of Tienshui stand awkwardly to spin the distaff, 30,000 of their sisters just across the mountains can use the spinning-wheel to produce a fine wool or cotton yarn, and have been doing so for years. Chingan cloth was carried by merchants for hundreds of miles in all directions, and brought prosperity to the little place. But one thing held it back: the cloth could only be two feet wide, since the loom was little more than a frame through which the weaver passed the warp from hand to hand on a wooden bow, like a man playing deck-tennis with himself.

Then one day in early 1939 a native craftsman spelled out a piece about Indusco in the newspaper. Borrowing the money for

his fare, he went south down the International Highway to Paochi, interviewed K. M. Lu, got the blue-prints of the broad loom used for army blankets, and went back with \$800 loan capital for one of the first Kansu co-operatives. A lot of carpenters scratched their heads over the blue-prints, but in the end none could be found in Chingan to make a loom from them; so he took it back to Tien-shui, got a refugee carpenter from Honan to make one there, and carted the loom bodily over the mountains.

With this model to go by, the local carpenter set to work, and had soon produced a dozen for the first co-op. Later, as chairman of a carpentry co-op, he supplied the looms for eleven more textile co-ops, whose 100 members are now weaving broad woollen cloth for sale all down the road from Lanchow to Sian. Banks have opened special branches in Chingan, and have recently loaned \$84,000 for co-operative expansion. The members, all of whom are local men, have started a primary school for their children out of the first year's Common Good Fund. They keep no trade secrets, meet regularly to discuss technical improvements and often exchange places so that fresh knowledge shall be the common property of all.

The road south, on which I set out after a few days in Chingan, lies through barren mountain country. Riding along the ridges, I could look down on miles of yellow mountain-side with no sign of life save the little clouds of dust that surrounded children sweeping the ground for grass and roots with which to make fuel; even now, in mid-winter, many of them had only short jackets and no pants to wear. In the scattered villages even the young men and women seemed somehow browbeaten by the enormity of the mountains around them; superfluous flesh hung in great breasts from the goitrous necks of the old and middle-aged, contrasting pathetically with their meagre, under-nourished bodies.

Sitting at a bench beside the road for some tea and frozen persimmons, I pulled out an old *New Yorker*, and the yokels gathered curiously round to peep over my shoulder. At Oxford it was always the Rhodes scholars who had had to explain the jokes to us slow-witted Englishmen; but here I found myself expounding and expanding in great style. It all fell quite flat, however, and I felt a long-overdue wave of sympathy for the Rhodes scholars. Even the lipstick and the Lastex ladies failed to arouse any comment, and the Camels were an abysmal flop. The situation was eventually saved by a cartoon of the Borden cows dashing out excitedly

to answer the *SHEFFIELD* of a sky-writing plane by forming up in columns to make their own name on the field. The white man's prestige was saved: the ways of his cows were mighty and inexplicable.

Taking once more to the road, I was soon confronted with a flat front tyre, and there was nothing for it but to hail a passing wood-puller, put my bicycle on top of his load, and help him pull the cart. Like most of the coolies seen on this road dressed in half of an old uniform, he was a runaway from the army, and not ashamed of it.

"We only got a few dollars a month, and had to buy our own shoes out of that," he said. "There was never enough to eat, either. Moving east to Honan, the officers were so afraid we'd run away that they locked us into the train even during an air raid. The train was bombed, killing a lot of men, and that was when I ran away."

Getting up early to haul his cart up the mountain, stacking it with wood and hauling it back next day, sometimes going for twenty-four hours without a meal, he had managed to repay fifty dollars in two months on the \$150 capital lent him by a friend. This, he said, was infinitely preferable to life in the army. "And now, Big Brother, if you wouldn't mind helping me push over this hump, and then stand on the brake while we go downhill, that'll be a help."

The driver of our Public Highways Commission bus along the next stage of the road from Tienshui was a bright eager lad, who had paid his own food and ten dollars per month tuition fee for an eighteen-month training course in driving, motor mechanics and road law. He was re-reading his law textbook one evening as we were getting ready for bed on the tables of a restaurant, in the tiny place at which our obstinate truck had stranded us for the night.

"How does the road law affect you?" I asked him.

He thought about this. "It really doesn't have much to do with us," he answered. "It works out this way: if we are disabled in an accident, we usually get a job in the bus station. If we kill or damage a mule or cart or some farm animal along the road, we have to fix the cost of the damage on the spot, and give the owner eighty per cent of it out of our own pockets. Lots of drivers just drive on, but I don't think that's right. If we kill an ordinary *lao pai hsing* or his child, we have to give \$300, but if we kill a passenger or anyone with position, there will be a big price, and we may

have to go to prison. The driver is automatically held responsible without investigation; a good many of our men are in prison right now."

Considering the material he is given to drive and the country he drives over, this seems hard. Motor-oil and gasoline are allotted strictly on mileage, regardless of hilly roads. This means that the engine is invariably shut off and thrown into neutral gear going downhill, to save gasoline for the uphill climb in low. Even so, it is common to see trucks stranded for lack of fuel a mile or so before each bus station. In an over-weighted truck free-wheeling for miles down steep mountain roads, the fate of everybody depends solely on the brakes, and on the dexterity of the driver, who with his two hands has to manipulate the hair-pin bends, blow the horn and haul back on the handbrake all at the same time.

A few weeks later I heard of an accident to the public bus near Hanchung. As the bus careered downhill in this manner an old woman wandered onto the road in front of it; the driver swerved to avoid her at the same moment that the old woman, seeing her danger, swerved in the same direction. The bus overturned, killing the old woman and several of the passengers, and I was not surprised to hear that the driver and his mate both took immediate flight, while an army officer among the passengers tried vainly to wing them with his Mauser.

I was reminded of this again later, when an amused transport man for British Red Cross supplies over the Burma Road said to me, "You know, the first thing Rewi Alley said to me after we'd been introduced was that we should be sure to get our truck-drivers organized into co-operatives!"

## BLUEPRINT OF THE FUTURE

ONE HUNDRED AND one kilometres from Paochi, where the roads from Lanchow and Chungking meet in a valley of the Tsingling Mountains, the discerning tourist spies, far up on the hillside, the mouth of what is now becoming popularly known as "Rewi Alley's Cave".

Some speak of it with sentimental affection.

"Very primitive, my dear," they write to their friends back in comparative civilization. "Of course there's no doorbell or knocker. The dear Chinese just walk in and out as though they owned the place."

Certain other quarters have held it to be a splendid country mansion, built out of "squeeze" money, and hired out at fantastic rentals to rich Americans. The only possible basis for this last rumour was Graham Peck, who was at that time almost penniless; Graham filled the cave's then empty bookcase with a row of attractively done wooden blocks entitled *From Blind Alley to Co-operative, Up Your Alley*, and so on, but he certainly paid no rent.

Various well-meaning friends dispatch equally well-meaning emissaries to "reform" Rewi's household ménage, and restore the man himself to at least a semi-foreign shadow of his respectable Shanghai Municipal Council days. These people usually go away saddened. Some of them have even stopped coming up to look—instead, they walk about the village picking up stories while their truck fills up with gas. "The people up there live just like the Chinese. Their cook can't even make the simplest semi-foreign dishes." Such stories ripen alarmingly with age, so that in some places "that poor man Alley" is considered to have already degenerated past help into a piece of Oriental "poor white trash".

The main distinctive feature of Rewi's cave in Shuangshihpu is exactly the same as that of his former house in Shanghai—that at any time out of school hours it is filled with boys. Boys looking at picture magazines and asking millions of questions. Boys playing the gramophone and singing out of tune. Boys doing gymnastics off Rewi's shoulders or being held upside down. Boys being given enemas, or rubbing sulphur ointment into each other's

scabies. Boys standing in brass wash-basins and splashing soapy water about. Boys toasting bare bottoms against the stove (the scar across Rewi's own nether portions testifies to his own indulgence in this form of amusement). Boys pulling the hairs on Rewi's legs, or fingering the generous proportions of the foreigner's nose. "Boys are just the same anywhere," says Rewi. "Wouldn't those kids have a swell time in New Zealand!"

Rewi would never admit that the number of fleas on the floor had anything to do with the number of boys who heaped their clothes on it before bathing.

"It's those damn puppies of yours," he insisted.

Later on, when the cook had secretly hatched a brood of fifteen chicks and two ducks, and these grew old enough to join the fun in the living-room cave, he could always blame it onto them.

The flea era lasted for nearly a year. On coming into the cave, those who were in the know, and so wore shorts, could immediately slap a dozen off each leg. If we liked the look of a visitor we would warn him to roll up his pant-legs before coming in. If we didn't, he would soon be fidgeting uncomfortably and remarking that it was about time he went down to supper, before it got dark and the wolves came out.

We covered the floor in inches of lime, and scrunched through it for days; the fleas were undaunted, and came out thick as ever when we took the lime up, thinking they would all have been burned to death. The puppies were bathed and disinfected, the chickens slaughtered and eaten; still the fleas thrived. Tins of Keating's Insect Powder were scrounged off friends in distant cities; the fleas simply lapped it up. A university chemical expert, to whom we wrote for advice, said that common salt was the very best thing—we bought up a hundred pounds of it from the market and mashed it in with our heels; the local farmers, calling up to have their skin diseases attended to or listen to the queer noises emitting from the foreigner's cave, were horrified at the waste (many of them had to eat hot pepper as a cheap substitute for salt, and suffered accordingly from goitre) and spread the story of it all through the neighbourhood.

Finally we invented a sterilizer into which the boys could drop their clothes before bathing. At the same time the large *k'ang*, or mud-brick bed, which had filled half the cave and made a nice breeding-ground for rats, was broken up and spread over the garden. The fleas gradually lessened and died out.

Encouraged, we had the walls re-whitewashed, the frontage



re-papered, and a small pane of glass, that had been brought all the way from Sian, fitted into the middle of the paper window. Various pictures were pinned up on the wall—New Zealand Maoris fishing from outrigger canoes, Chinese soldiers posing boldly in woodcut, "American Scenes" cut out of a magazine; photos of friends: boyish Ida Pruitt with a group of American-born engineers whom she'd brought out of Hong Kong to work for Indusco; exquisite Nym Wales, head and shoulders; bluff Henry Luce and smooth-tailored wife Clare Boothe snapped standing in front of a Paochi towel-making co-op; Mike, one of Rewi's many Chinese "sons", looking rather like a whimsical rat.

We bought a table-cloth and scrubbed the bare wood furniture with sand. On the desk against the light of the paper window we stood a large, amply robed Buddha with folded hands, who in case of extreme need could be conjured into frock-coated butler bringing in tray of drinks. To add a further touch of culture, we dug niches in the walls in the shape of cathedral windows, and filled them with high-nosed, bearded statues of hitherto unsung contemporaries of Marco Polo, unearthed from the new city moat being dug around Loyang. Short-sighted missionary visitors could hardly believe their eyes! If they were the kind who had rolled up their trousers in the old flea-ridden days, we took them over to look; if they were the other kind, we let them go away muttering dark things about heathen idolatry.

Whenever news came that Rewi was due back in the Northwest, I hopped a truck for Shuangshihpu and the cave. As like as not, by the time I got there Rewi would already be sitting comfortably on a piece of co-operative carpet spread over a co-operative armchair, beside a co-operative stove burning co-operative coal, his feet protected from the cold of a co-operative brick floor by a pair of co-operative leather slippers—everything, except the coal, being plainly and individually marked with a Gung Ho trademark. (One always expected to see the red

triangle



across Rewi's bottom when he stripped.)

On his desk would be a terrific pile of correspondence, which critics swore he addressed to himself, answering himself on his non-stop career from co-op to co-op and depot over the countryside. On the stove a pot of coffee; and as an excuse for me to stop in

Shuangshihpu and help drink it for at least a few days, there was always the matter of the North-west C.I.C.'s Bailie School to be attended to.

The purpose of this school was to take young working boys from co-operatives, teach them to read and write, give them a grounding in technical subjects and machine drawing, and send them back as shock-workers to the co-operatives. The idea was popular abroad, and the school had been started and run entirely on funds subscribed to Indusco through the International Committee from the South Seas and the United States. My job was to help work out the projects, make appeals for money, write reports, get pictures and human-interest stories on the boys.

As with so many things, the snags only became apparent after the school was well under way and we were committed to making a go of it. The co-ops were afraid that if they sent their steadiest young workers they might never see them again, and perhaps also afraid of what education would do to them; so instead of these they sent their problem cases—usually semi-educated middle-class boys who had failed to adapt themselves to worker conditions when their families fell on hard times after 1937. These boys were filled either with consuming self-pity or with burning ambition to use the school as a stepping-stone towards long-fingernailed office jobs. Being better-educated, they were looked up to as leaders by the other boys, and their attitude affected the spirit of the whole school. The schoolmasters meanwhile were pained by the raw habits of the working-class boys, and volunteer teachers from the various other C.I.C. organizations in Shuangshihpu were baffled by the mixture of educated and illiterate students to be taught in the same class.

The headmaster was changed seven times within the first twelve months. Nobody quite knew what the school was for, but the boys and the masters themselves both grew to have a sneaking idea that it was some kind of badly organized foreign charity, and that the only thing to be done, short of getting out of it altogether, was to eat one's rice and live through it as best one might. Under these circumstances, the boys lost faith in themselves, and many of the elder ones drifted away.

A good gauge of the school's condition was the number of lice to be found in my two adopted sons' shirts. On one particular week-end I squashed ninety-six in the younger one's only; there were still plenty more, so I burned the shirts and bought them new ones. Next day the eighth headmaster resigned—an intel-

lectual fellow with the benefit of several years' European education behind him.

K. M. Lu was in Shuangshihpu at the time, and he elected me to take over as Number Nine until he could find someone else. As composer of the plans and reports that had gone out about the school, written always with a hopeful emphasis on the what-might-be, I had some responsibility in the matter. Anyhow, it was a challenge. I felt pleased with the idea of trying to do something on my own after three years spent merely reporting on other people's work.

## II

"The sun was setting gently behind the western mountains. A small red cloud, really lovable, was hanging in the warm atmosphere. I walked alone over the mountains in the evening light, and came to a long, grassy stretch in a lonely, uninhabited valley. I was looking round me at the beauty when out from the grass jumped two yellow-grey animals like dogs. My heart dropped, my courage fell, as the wolves came chasing towards me. I had no weapon. I ran. In front was a ravine, behind were the wolves. My spirit was ready to ascend, but at the most dangerous moment I shouted . . . I awoke. In the school dormitory it was *just* dawn. Dogs were barking far and near, and these familiar sounds drove away the thought of my dream.

"It was my turn to go out and buy vegetables. As I left the school and started down the hill towards the village, it was already six o'clock, and by the time I got back they had already finished breakfast. Tomorrow I must get up earlier. I know that to serve the community is a most honourable thing.

"At noon a fire broke out in the village, and we all went down to help. Some students from another school were there too, and together we had soon put the fire out.

"At two o'clock we started out to inspect the *Tung Ta P'ing* textile co-operative. The orderly file of students wound along the path beside the highway. From the road we could see green water and clear mountains. There was a farmer working in the fields. He must labour unceasingly, sweating bitterly in the hot weather. Also a little girl leading cows and sheep; she was singing a very happy song.

"After a little while we arrived at the co-op. Chairman of Inspectors Mr. Liu talked to us about the business of the co-op,

its purpose and management. His talk had great point for us students. When he had finished we all saluted him, to thank him, and went back to school. On the road we sang 'Gung Ho Hao!', 'Indusco Comrades' and other songs, in very high spirits.

"After arriving, we had flag-lowering ceremony and a talk on the day's doings from the teacher. At evening meeting we discussed the food-supply problem. We eat only bread, millet, or noodles, and one dish of vegetables for six people, but last month we used all but five cents per head of our allowance; this month things are even more expensive."

The diarist, Ch'en Hsi-k'wei, left his home near Nanking with his mother when the Japanese were almost at the gates of his village, and walked for several weeks across to Hankow. From there he took a refugee train to Sian, worked for a while as a factory boy, and then set off for Szechwan. But the mountains and the length of the road were too much for him, and he ended up in Tienshui, Kansu, where he became a C.I.C. office boy.

Here he was busier than ever—first up in the morning, rushing all over town with messages on a bicycle several sizes too large for him, and last to bed at night. But he was happy and keen on his job. One New Year's Day, when everyone else had gone home, I heard him ringing the office bell imperiously, giving himself orders in a deep, husky voice, calling up all sorts of imaginary bank officials on the telephone and announcing: "I am Chinese Industrial Co-operatives" in a very loud voice. Then he disappeared for several hours, and came back happier and huskier than ever, having hauled my bicycle up the mountain above the city and coasted all the way back again.

Eighteen months later, Ch'en Hsi-k'wei had been elected as head boy of the Shuangshihpu Bailie School, and chairman of the students' consumers' co-operative. He was nearly ready to go back to a Tienshui co-operative as accountant.

When Su Ching-ho came to the school from an army-blanket weaving co-op in Paochi, he was old enough to become a useful workman within a year or two, but still young and unformed enough to absorb the idea of Indusco to the full. Without sufficient learning to put ideas into his head about being a scholar or a small official, he yet had sufficient for a grounding, and a great deal of ordinary intelligence. His family was poor, which had given him the habit of looking after himself, but not so poor nor so sonless as to depend on Ching-ho for its livelihood. His future was

thus a blank page with "*Indusco*" underlined at the top. After six months in the school we sent him with five other Bailie boys to study new small-unit woollen textile machinery under an American engineer in Chengtu, and bring the machinery back to the North-west.

A native Shensi lad arrived at the school—filthy, illiterate, with the back of his head shaved and the front hair coming down over his eyes. He proved to have an extremely sturdy and independent personality, taking no nonsense from anybody. Today, with his head shaved all over, he is clean even behind the ears, can write letters and do long division. This kind of boy will be worth far more in terms of loyalty and pep to the movement than the cost of their food and clothing in school.

Four years ago, in the part of Honan lying north of the Yellow River, a small boy on his way home from school was taken off by a Chinese regiment to be its boil'-water-pourer. The boy fetched and carried and made tea for the officers at the front for several years, until the regiment was ordered south to help the British in Burma. One day during the second week of marching, the boy found himself drinking from the spout of a teapot belonging to a fellow Honanese, who was chairman of a co-operative in Fenghsien, near Shuangshihpu.

"Where are you off to, fellow countryman?" inquired the owner of the teapot.

"We're going to England to fight the Japanese."

"To England! But a little dog like you will never get there at all! The rains will come, and you won't be there. The snows will come, and still you won't be there. Why don't you come and work in our co-operative instead? We could do with a lad like you."

So Chang Seng-i buttoned up all the buttons he could find, and painted ink-marks round the holes of those he couldn't, and went off to ask leave from his officers.

"Sure, you stay with the co-op," they said; "we can easily find another boy when we get there."

Chang Seng-i became a co-op apprentice, and later a Bailie boy. He is slow, but works hard at everything; he is very easy-going and able to get along with everybody. Someday he will make a good co-op chairman.

Tough and short-sighted, Wang Ching doesn't give the best of impressions to visitors. He is a native peasant lad, who can make himself understood, and the name "co-op" trusted, through all

the Kansu Mountains where suspicious farmers guard precious coal and metal ores. His favourite trick was to lie on my bed pleading belly-pains until I went out, and then make surreptitious passes over his face with my razor. When we all walked over the mountains for an inspection trip to Paochi, he was all but persuaded by fellow students that the locomotive we saw there concealed several oxen within the boiler. And when we made our first ride in the train, they had him out saluting the engine-driver to make it start. Though Wang Ching never became very proficient with the writing brush, he learned a lot from the sharp-witted refugees and others who were his school-mates.

Soon after I took over in the school there arrived a tall eighteen-year-old middle-school student, with a letter from a Paochi co-op asking for admission. We decided to give him a trial on accountancy. For the first month he was lazy, haughty and unhappy, and probably only stayed in the school because he couldn't go back to his co-op and didn't know where else to feed himself. Then suddenly he began to lead school debates, attend newspaper-reading circles, and work hard at his subject. As elected captain of one of the student teams, he invented many ways in which team captains could arouse competitive spirit and encourage self-discipline. His team led in doing voluntary jobs of labour and school improvement. Later, he and another boy volunteered to take special afternoon literacy and arithmetic classes for the most backward boys and the school cook.

Problem Child Number One—spoiled only son, cry-baby and piss-a-bed—was Chu Ying-k'wei, commonly hailed as "Big-head, Big-head! Who doesn't need an umbrella when it rains?" His father was lost somewhere north of the Yellow River with a C.I.C. depot, and his mother earned just enough to keep herself in a Paochi women's tailoring co-op. How to get rid of him, or what to do with the boy under these circumstances, was a knotty problem. In the end we did nothing specific, but a lot of things just naturally happened.

One afternoon we had all been down by the river, making a sand map of Asia with real seas and rivers, after swimming. To finish things off we all took big stones and bombed Japan until it sank under the water. Chu Ying-k'wei liked the idea so much that he took to bombing the peasants' ducks, on the theory that they were Japanese submarines. This was strictly against orders, and Ying-k'wei soon found himself sitting with all his clothes on

in the river. The howling was terrific, and lasted nearly all day; but it was a milestone.

The trouble of taking his quilt out to air every morning after he had wetted it was enough to cause young Chu to sit on the side of his bed at night and make water onto the floor. Various punishments were thought up for this, until it became a matter of the past. But cruel jokers continued to sprinkle water all round his bed at night, and then point accusingly at it next morning, until Chu Ying-k'wei began to surround his bed with a lot of hawthorn prickles to keep the jokers away. The trouble of climbing out over his own barricade in the dark soon cured him of everything, and now his sleep is unbroken.

Whichever of the school teams had Ying-k'wei in it always got bottom marks for orderliness. So that when the time came for re-dividing the room-mate teams, Big-head found himself very definitely unwanted. The deadlock was got out of by electing him to be school captain. After that it was easy. Dirty face, unbuttoned trousers, unmade bed, the admonition was the same, unanswerable and shame-inflicting: "The school captain shouldn't do things like that, you know, Ying-k'wei. He should set a good example. . . ."

The last time he ever cried was over the matter of the old Ford V-8 truck engine that was brought up to the school for the boys to clean and take to pieces. Somebody had remarked that it looked very much like a turtle. To Big-head, who had sweated his guts out helping to carry it on poles up the hill to school, such an insinuation was rank heresy. A fight resulted, in which Ying-k'wei, being top-heavy, was worsted.

Since the Bailie School takes all kinds of boys—tall and short, educated and illiterate, slow peasants from the sticks and slick-witted city refugees—and tries to make a composite boy out of them—it may be as well to reduce the thing to a table:—

TABLE SHOWING LOCAL BACKGROUNDS OF SHUANGSHIHPU  
BAILIE SCHOOLBOYS

<i>Region &amp; Province</i>	<i>General Background</i>	<i>Number of Boys</i>
1. North-east (Manchuria)	Occupied by the Japanese since the Mukden Incident in 1931. These boys mostly come from middle-class families which fell on hard times as a result of war. Some have good educational grounding. All are widely travelled, and so quick and resourceful.	
Liaoning		7.
Heilungchiang		2
		— 9

TABLE SHOWING LOCAL BACKGROUND OF SHUANGSHIMPU  
BAILIE SCHOOL BOYS (*continued*)

<i>Region &amp; Province</i>	<i>General Background</i>	<i>Number of Boys</i>
2. <i>North Central</i>		
Honan	These provinces are traditional exporters of man-power—of industrial workers and ricksha coolies to the coastal and river cities, of road and railway builders to the North-west, of peasants to the unsettled plains of Manchuria, of soldiers everywhere. Since the war, the only outlet for this stream of young men has been to the North-west. The ravages of war and of flood, the cruelty of the Japanese, have added new waters to the old stream. All these provinces are comparatively well industrialized, and subject to new influences from the coast.	22
Hopei		4
Shantung		2
		28
3. <i>North-west</i>		
Shensi	Usually held to be the poorest and least educated part of all China. Its possibilities are enormous. Bare farmlands and mountains cover rich resources. Communications are much improved, and the old "back door" to China from Turkestan is rapidly becoming a front door. The native people must be taught the skill and given the organizing ability to develop their real wealth.	13
Kansu		6
		19
4. <i>South-east</i>		
Anhwei	Homes occupied by Japanese. Apt to be snobbish and less co-operative, but rather bright and quick as compared with the Northerners.	2
Kiangsi		1
		—

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The job was to smelt this varied human material into a real community, without the help of any past school tradition and with only a negative past school spirit. A technique of sorts was evolved as time went by:—

1. Everybody had to learn to sing. Resistance songs and folk-tunes alternated. Some of the latter, such as the Kansu coal-carriers' song, could not have been heard outside these mountains. Some came from far-away southern provinces.

2. Everybody had to get up early in the mornings, swim in the river at least once a day, and rub sulphur ointment into his scabies, if he had any. Put to the poll, it turned out that over



half the students believed it natural for the human body to have lice. Health talks and swimming in the river soon cured this.

3. Everybody had to help with improvement of school grounds. Plenty of spades and pickaxes were bought, so that the boys could work competitively in gangs.

4. For classwork the school divided into three grades. Several of the most backward boys were put into a special afternoon literacy class. The rest spent their afternoons in the workshops on textile equipment, truck engines, benchwork, a lathe driven by a small Diesel engine, and a model steam engine; or went down for practical work in one of the co-operatives.

5. For eating, sleeping and self-discipline the boys split into three school teams, each with an elected team captain. The teams were re-divided four times a year to prevent sectionalism. Each captain was responsible for the personal-living questions of his team. He led the group discussions in the dormitory at nights, and drew up resolutions from the team to be presented to the school General Meeting on Saturdays. Self-discipline was recognized to be the only kind that would count as training for after-work in a disorganized society. School tasks were portioned out to team captains, who gave them to whichever of their team members needed a disciplinary reminder. Two incentives to improvement were found to be of use here: first, general admiration of youth for army smartness and discipline; second, fear that they were not attending a real school at all, but a kind of crackpot charity scheme, and general recognition as time went on that it depended on themselves as to whether this was true or not.

6. Self-management as a training for future co-operators. Besides the weekly General Meeting with its six executive departments for Food, Wall Newspaper, Labour Service, Library and Newspaper-reading, Sport, Recreation and Dramatics, the students formed their own consumers' co-operative at which to spend their monthly twenty-dollar allowances for soap, towels, sandals, pencils, and so on. A loan of \$500 was secured from the Paochi Indusco Treasury, and \$462 paid up by staff and students in share capital. At the end of the first quarter the co-op declared a net profit of \$422.80, of which 50 per cent was distributed to members in purchase-dividends. Reserves, amounting to 30 per cent of net profits, were invested in a stock cupboard. Common Good Fund, 10 per cent, was used to buy pencils for distribution among the

members. The remaining 10 per cent went as bonus to co-op officers. Accounts were kept in modern style by the boys themselves, and the balance sheet, profit-and-loss statement and other accounts were gone over in detail with the whole school, as a lesson in practical accountancy.

Democracy worked. But it was far more trouble than dictatorship. It so happened that three causes of division, neither of them serious in itself, coincided to make a definite split in the student body.

<i>Cause of Split</i>	<i>Group A</i>	<i>Group B</i>
1. "Boys will be boys"	New Boys	Old Originals
2. Regional differences	North-easterners from coastal provinces	North-westerners from central and hinterland provinces
3. Class differences	Middle class, fallen on hard times	Peasant and worker class, growing to new consciousness

The North-easterners of Group A came from an industrially developed country, long open to foreign influences. Being of pioneer stock, they were extremely independent and rather individualistic. Those who were driven out of their homes by the 1931 Mukden Incident suffered a good deal of unequal treatment, especially before the country as a whole declared war on Japan in 1937, and have therefore learned to stand together for good or ill. The North-west, on the other hand, is only recently being opened up. Its young people, regarded as country bumpkins (*i'u pao-tze*) by outsiders, resent the inference that they are lazy and good-for-nothing, and tend to be over-sensitive about their own inability to speak good Peiping dialect. The class factor was in practice often indistinguishable from the regional one. Native peasant boys from the hinterland were suddenly brought into contact with middle-class boys from the coast.

The undercurrent of tension between these two groups popped out in the most surprising places. During the singing of an old Kansu folksong, into which the whole school seemed to be thrown

ing itself with tremendous enthusiasm, a native boy jumped up to shout:—

"They think they're clever, don't they, copying our accent like that!"

One morning at breakfast there was an uproar because the millet soup was burned, though none of the boys would have thought of making a fuss about this ordinarily. It turned out that the executive head of the food department had been elected to the post by members of the rival gang, with the express intention of giving him the works whenever an opportunity presented itself!

Old jokes, like "How many oxen are there in a locomotive boiler?" and impolite terms of address such as "You Kansu buckwheat bag!", repeated *ad nauseam*, now took on a new hard note, until in the end the boys themselves got tired of schism and were glad to find a way out.

The North-easterner group was easy to deal with. They had learned by bitter experience what national disunity could mean, and were politically conscious enough to be able to apply the simile to their school. Some of the older ones were already trying to lead the rest of the students towards wider national consciousness, and these readily grasped the idea that you couldn't expect people to listen to what you said about big things until you first got them to co-operate with you over small things. I put it to them as a problem of leadership.

Group B was harder. For one thing, it was more difficult for us to speak the same language. They were closer with their thoughts, and referred everything to a set of social standards that I didn't properly understand. They were very polite, but less prone to accept ideas from an outsider, especially from a foreigner. And of course they were very sensitive on matters concerning class or education.

"The north-eastern students are very proud," one of them said. "They look down on us because we come from poor homes. But of course, when it comes to that, if their own families hadn't been short of cash they would have gone to middle school instead of coming here at all."

It seemed to be just self-confidence that was lacking.

"Those North-easterners look very proud to you," I told them. "Actually they are homesick, and think that everybody here is against them. You should help make them feel at home. Anyhow, the school is run for people like you mostly, and not for them."

It's true that if their homes had had more funds they would have gone to middle school instead of coming here, and many would still go now if they had a chance. But later on, if we can build the school up properly, they will sooner come here than to any middle school."

In the end the thing straightened itself out all right. The North-easterners went about their personal relations with less pride and a marked politeness. The local boys came off the defensive and opened up. After a few weeks we sent a group of mixed North-easterners and North-westerners away to Chengtu together, to learn the new textile machinery. The fact that good money was spent in sending these five boys all the way to Chengtu restored a great deal of self-confidence to those who didn't go, and gave them faith in the school as a going concern.

There were several theories on how best to ensure future loyalty of the boys to C.I.C. Some people advocated a sort of swearing-in system; others said that each boy must find a guarantor who would pay the equivalent of his food and clothes in school if he afterwards went away. None of these methods was effective. The very boys whose background gave them the biggest likelihood of a lifelong loyalty to the movement had most difficulty in finding anyone to stand bond for them.

"Most of those kids are subconsciously looking for parents," said Rewi one day. "The best thing to do is to mother them until they look on the school and Indusco as 'family'. Then they'll stick by, no matter what happens later on." This became known as "Rewi's mothering method". Its approach lay through treatment for scabies, malaria, sore eyes, dysentery. It involved at first a tremendous amount of time spent in listening to woes, patching cut knees, towelling dirty backs and rubbing in sulphur ointment. It involved even expensive things like sulphanilamide tablets, fish-liver extract, and sending boys to Sian to have their eyes tested. Most people thought we were crazy, but as far as I could see there was nothing crazier than paying for boys to be trained, and then letting them get unhealthy, or go away from the school with no particular sense of loyalty.

It was found that two of the boys needed circumcision. The Indusco doctor from Paochi came up with two nurses, carrying a little black bag filled with cotton wool and sharp instruments. One of the boys got scared and began screaming in spite of the local anaesthetic. A peasant peered in the window, and rushed away waving his arms in great agitation.

"The foreigners are castrating the students to make them fat!" he shouted excitedly.

The school reputation locally went down with a bang, until, a few days later, the smiling victim himself was able to explain what it was all about.

Meanwhile a certain American-born Chinese lady, who had come to the North-west a few days before in search of social phenomena, was making inquiries of one of our native Kansu boys, whom she had met on the path outside the school.

"Can you tell me what those two boys are being operated on for?"

"They are having their small-sides out," said Wang Ching, the oaf, helpfully.

"Please tell me what small-side is"—in her best Chinese.

"Don't you understand what small-side is? Why! Small-side as apart from big-side, you know."

The lady went away, more mystified than ever. Wang Ching sought me out, puzzled. "Why did you tell me she was a Chinese? I know she looks like one, but she can't be if she doesn't know what small-side is."

One way or another, we got on quite well with the family-making business. After all, if the kids were unconsciously searching for parents, as Rewi insisted, then maybe we were unconsciously looking for kids. Anyway, by the time we all made the hike across the Tsingling Mountains to join the International Co-op Day celebrations in Paochi, the schools had quite a definite community spirit.

Walking together, camping together in farmhouses, swimming together in new and exciting pools, sometimes going hungry together, and often marching until we were very hot and tired, arriving in a new place together, performing our songs in front of strange people, and inspecting lots of new co-ops which were all part of our "family"—all this did something to the school. As, rounding a corner on the last stretch of the way back to Shuang-shihpu, we caught sight of our own particular mountain with the school lying neat and snug beneath it, a spontaneous cheer went up that afterwards made all of us feel very warm and proud of ourselves. From that day I knew that we would make something of the school.

The trouble was always much more with the staff than with the boys. The Chinese, who recognize themselves to be careless of details and happy-go-lucky by nature, have over-compensated by

putting too much emphasis on the forms of things adopted from the West. Thus, with education, any departure from usual educational practice could only be regarded by the average school-teacher as heretic and deplorable, never as a possible new step forward. Since there was nothing about Bailie schools in the educationalists' textbooks, they were usually at a loss as to how to proceed. This difficulty was increased by the local small officials, who looked askance at anything "different", and sent round their spies to see if any dangerous thoughts were being disseminated.

Andy Braid—farmer, tap-dancer, cost-accountant, nurse, mechanic, philosopher, truck-driver, admired by the boys on account of his removable front tooth—a bagpiping Scots Highlander, lent us by the Friends' Ambulance Unit—and his interpreter Chow Hsueh-yu, were above all this sort of thing.

Andy came and conquered with his bagpipes. He had soon taught the younger boys how to do a passable (but none of us knew the difference, anyway) Eightsome Reel. Meanwhile he was teaching accountancy and truck engines, health, and patching up various bodily ailments. His day began with leading the boys down to swim in the river at 5 a.m., and finished with putting drops in their trachoma-sore eyes at 8.30 in the evening.

The final touch came when we wanted a man to castrate the school piglets. "Used to keep pigs myself in Scotland," he said. "I suppose Chinese pigs work the same. Let me do that."

The enthusiasm of the boys, most of whom had previously imagined foreigners as good for nothing but sitting in motor-cars and eating with forks, knew no bounds. "He comes to China," said one, aged thirteen, "he can't speak much Chinese, but he castrate pigs!"

Chow, educated at Oberlin-in-China, was the same sort. Besides interpreting for Andy, he took classes on his own, coached the basket-ball team, and acted as Treasurer for the Consumers' Co-op.

Then there was a nervous, unstable fellow named Ting, who was always being carried away by some big idea or other, and badly ragged by the students. We kept him for a time because he was good at his job—machine-drawing—and because we couldn't find anyone else.

"My mother says I'm unbalanced, the students say I'm unbalanced, and even my brother denounces me publicly as a lunatic. At bottom, I don't know myself whether I'm not crazy." His father, a big-shot in the navy, had fallen on bad times and

opium; his mother had continued with mah-jongg, selling all the family belongings to pay her debts, while Ting himself was trying to finish technical school by borrowing from friends. Two years later, heavily in debt, he was doing his best to support a mother and young brother on a schoolmaster's salary, while longing all the time to rush away south and drive a truck, or north and become a guerilla—anywhere to get away from responsibility. "It's not right that a young man of my age should have so many problems weighing him down," he cried, in one of his fits of despair. Andy was the only one who could jolly him along on these occasions—make him feel a hero, announce him over the microphone as "Wonder Ting, the playboy of Shuangshihpu", and compliment him on his English rendering of "Rainbow on the River"—"Better than the gramophone record, really!"

The others were just a succession; their attitude was expressed by K'ang, forty-one-year-old school-teacher, in a conversation he had with me the day before he left.

"The boys here are unruly. They don't understand correct school manners," he said.

"That's quite true. I hope that Teacher K'ang will do his best to help them do so."

"If they don't understand manners, then there is no point in our trying to teach them," the educationalist spoke. "We need hardly be expected to sacrifice our own spiritual energy to that extent."

Educational conservatism, supposed by its devotees to be based on conformity to the Western practice, has as its counterpart a kind of technical conservatism, still in its dream stage, but none the less stultifying, which takes the outworn ideal of industrial concentration as its religion.

While in England, a forward-looking scientist could write:—

The reaction against city life has already started. It can go in two ways, the Nazi or Fascist way, and the scientific. The Nazis want to take the unemployed out of the cities and turn them into peasants, to win a meagre living from the soil without the aid of farm machinery or supplies of power. The alternative way depends on the decentralisation of industry, making full use of modern means of distributing power wherever it is required, and of the best techniques of communication to keep widely separated factories or offices in touch with each other. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Waddington, Sc.D., in *The Scientific Attitude*, published by Penguin Books in Pelican A.84. Page 109.

and while United States writers have described the industrial revolution now going on in hundreds of Chinese villages as a "blueprint of the future", Chinese artists depict the industrialization of New China as being something like a glorified Shanghai slum, and the average Chinese engineer looks on decentralized, small-concentration industry as something beneath his notice, or at best as an unfortunate war-time necessity.

If Indusco is really only a war-time expedient—if the advent of widely distributed power and cheap transportation means nothing to industrial organization—then a school to train co-operative leaders for the future is meaningless. But more probably CENTRALIZED PLANNING, DECENTRALIZED EXECUTION is an industrial slogan not only for China now, but for the world and the future. The Bailie boys—practical, strong and with a fixed desire to create a society that will be worth serving—have their place in the scheme of things, not only for war, but for peace.

Every Saturday, at the school meeting, two boys aged fifteen and thirteen used to get up with the same question: "When is the school going to get us a teacher for mining?"

They were both North-easterners. Close to their homes in Manchuria some of the best coal and iron deposits in China were being worked by the Japanese. What young Chu and Nieh wanted was to fight back to Manchuria, and one of the ways they proposed doing this was to help open up new mines in the mountains of Shensi and Kansu. Though the school hasn't yet found them a teacher for mining, they have been on many a week-end expedition to find things out for themselves. In the following report on a six-day trip to a coal mine, the headings are mine, given to them as an outline for investigation; the material is exactly as they presented it to me.

#### *Road from Shuangshihpu to Two-River-Mouth*

This is part of the North-west International Highway. We met mule-carts bringing down Russian ammunition from the north, and later were overtaken by a fleet of trucks belonging to the Yumen Oil Co.; these trucks were taking cracking equipment up to the oil-wells north of Lanchow, and will return taking gasoline to Chungking.

Peasants were using the road to carry cloth to Shensi from Hweih sien in southern Kansu, and to bring wood and charcoal to Shuangshihpu. Not far from Shuangshihpu we passed



several timber-chutes close to the road, and watched the tree-trunks come tumbling down.

### *Paths from Two-River-Mouth to the Coal-Mine*

The most usual route is via East-Slope village. It is 15 *li* (5 miles) long and crosses two mountains of 740 feet and 950 feet respectively above the river-bed, dropping right down to river level in between. After dropping down to river level for the third time one must climb 1300 feet to the mine itself. To build a road over this terrain is therefore almost impossible. The river (which is actually the extreme upper reaches of the Chialing River) may be crossed by plank bridge in dry seasons, forded after medium rain, but becomes impassable after heavy rain.

In dry seasons it is possible to make one's way along the river-bed itself. This way is 18 *li*. To make a road or bed for light railway would entail a good deal of rock-breaking. Over one stretch the road would have to be cut right into the rocky cliff face. Several men were killed doing a similar piece of rock-cutting for the North-west International Highway.

Continuing farther west along the highway from Two-River-Mouth, there is a third route, longer than the others. This path is better than the others in wet weather. Road-building would be easier, except for a rocky stretch several *li* in length.

A fourth route to the mine from Shuangshihpu strikes west from the Hanchung road. It is too long and mountainous to be practicable, though it is now sometimes used by peasants in wet weather.

### *The Coal-Mine*

We were unable to enter the mine, as one of the two tunnel entrances had fallen in, stopping ventilation. Repairs were in progress, and digging was scheduled to begin within a few days. The mine runs horizontally for about a hundred metres into the mountain. It is about four feet high, and propped roughly with logs. Coal is high-quality bituminous.

Mr. Tai, manager of the mine, told us that from April to July 1942 the mine underwent extensive repairs, so that during this period it produced only 100 tons of coal. During the next two months 170 tons were produced. Mr. Tai said that production could easily be put up to fifteen or twenty tons a day if

the mine had (a) sufficient circulating capital, and (b) a cheaper means of transporting the coal to the highway.

There are at present nine workers in the coal-mine, going in three at a time in three daily shifts. Six of them are Honanese, one local Kansu, two Kiangsu. They have no family dependents. Their wages, non-inclusive, were \$240 in July, \$360 in September.

When asked his attitude towards forming a co-operative, the manager said, "There would be no difficulty. In fact we are already proceeding with the formation of a co-op." The workmen, when spoken to individually, said, "You can organize a co-operative or you can also not organise a co-operative. We shall still be working here."

The carriers who take the coal from the mine to the highway are all hired day-labourers. They are local peasants. They carry loads of 130 to 180 catties (160 to 240 lbs.) over tracks that are too steep for donkeys. Only the native people can do this. As they are often busy with agriculture, and in any case don't usually work unless they have no food, it is often impossible to get the coal down to the highway.

### *Coke*

If the coal could be converted into coke at the mine, transportation costs would be cut by half. Equipment for a small coking furnace has been carried up the mountain, but the coke expert has been sick in bed for many weeks, so work is held up.

### *Possibilities of the Neighbouring Iron-Mine*

Peasants told us that the path to the iron-mine crosses no high mountains, but descends into and climbs out of one deep valley. In the bottom of the valley it runs for 20 or 30 *li* through shallow streams and mud. Estimates of distance vary between 60 and 120 *li*. The general opinion seems to be that you couldn't get there in one day.

The peasants in the coal-mine district discouraged us from trying to make the trip. No one from their district had made the journey since 1939. They told us, "The people in that village would be sure to take you for run-away soldiers, and would be afraid to give you food or a place to sleep in case of future punishment. They would refuse to speak to you."

Manager Tai promised to find us a suitable guide and to accompany us to the iron-mine at a future date.

We gathered the following information about the iron-mine from the people of the coal-mine village: The iron-mine is a horizontal tunnel running into a mountain-side. It has not been worked since the Ch'ing Dynasty (*i.e.* pre-1911). It is guarded by two families named Chu, for the owner, who is also called Chu, and lives in another district.

The social difficulties in the way of opening an iron-mine co-operative in such a district would be great, whatever the quality of the iron.

### *Local Customs and Peculiarities*

Almost every family in the two main villages of the coal-mine district—East Slope Village and West Slope Village—is called by the surname Feng.

The marrying age for girls is either fifteen or seventeen. No other age is considered auspicious.

There are very many temples of mixed kinds. The people are very superstitious, and go through the rituals at all of them.

The people say that two man-size monkeys live on the precipitous mountain opposite the mine, and that these monkeys can sometimes be seen fishing in the river.

"How do you know they are monkeys?" we asked.

"Because they wear no clothes, and their bodies are covered with red hair."

The old people, especially women, carry little black teapots about wherever they go, with straight handles and drinking-spouts. The drink is known as *ts'ao ts'a* (fried tea). It is made by pouring water on an essence of crushed walnuts, vegetable oil, a little salt, and tea leaves. It tasted very bitter to us.

The people wear very loose clothes. The women like to have a very broad hem all round the edge of their garments, of blue or black colour. They have forgotten the reason for this.

The people are very hardy, though to look at they are not healthy. Even the women can carry water and till the fields. Many do this on bound feet, though these are becoming rare in women over thirty years old. The men carry loads over mountains where even animals can't go. They eat corn-meal. Many have goitre.

In several districts there seems to be some kind of mineral internal combustion going on. There were holes where we

could put an arm in and feel the warmth. Manager Tai said that sometimes steam or smoke can be seen rising from these holes early in the morning.

An old man who said he had hewed coal for forty years told us about one of these places. "We had mined about ten *chang* (a *chang* is ten feet) into the mountain," he said. "We didn't know anything about ventilation tunnels then, and one morning, just as we were going down, the gas lit inside. We managed to get out unhurt. The fire has been smouldering for two and a half years now, and nobody can go in.

"There is a stream running through the rocks near the mine," he continued. "After the fire had been burning some time the water came out so hot you could make tea. We had nothing to do, so we made a fine bed out of pine needles and grass, just where the hot water came out. That was in the days when there was still opium. We used to lie out on the bed smoking and drinking tea. It was quite warm, even in winter.

"Suddenly one afternoon the ground opened up and swallowed the bed, the hot steam, and all. Not a few of the men from our village went down. When he heard about it, the new schoolmaster of our village said it was quite right, for they shouldn't have been smoking opium. But I don't know. I'm an old man with three sons, and I wouldn't have liked for any of them to go down."

#### IV

Rewi Alley had been getting too much fan mail. Someone in London had done a bronze statue of him. American magazines had made a feature story of "Alley, the Man".

In the cave we carved the text HE IS ALTOGETHER LOVELY from a piece of pink paper. The odd letters that dropped out fell naturally into an unrepeatably rude epithet. Text and epithet were pinned up together over Rewi's bed one morning before he climbed out of his mosquito net.

The awful thing was that he didn't laugh. In fact he actually sulked for two or three days on end, wouldn't speak to us, read the newspaper over breakfast, and went out for long walks by himself. One day we came back to find the text torn down, and the man Rewi himself sitting lost in thought as usual, before his typewriter. The real trouble, as he thereupon divulged, was not so much the text as news of an attempt to canalize all American

funds for Chinese Industrial Co-operatives through the central C.I.C. office in Chungking, and to use part of them to provide "rice money" for the officials there, whom all field workers and co-op members regarded as a bunch of useless bureaucrats. On the very day when we had put up the text, Rewi had wired in his resignation to Chungking rather than put his name to this "rice money" scheme.

Of course his resignation was refused—for the time being. This was the beginning of a long struggle, the basic issue of which was whether American funds subscribed to the C.I.C. by co-operators and believers in Chinese democracy should be used to strengthen centralized control, or whether these funds should be used to strengthen field work in the hope that a federated people's co-op movement would eventually become strong enough to take over the centralized functions of planning, co-ordinating, and research.

The use of Western funds in a country still suffering from the hangover of a hundred years of Western imperialism involved all sorts of hidden dangers. To administer such funds direct to the field through an international body answerable to the contributors, and through the collecting agency in the United States or whatever part of the world it was raised in, instead of through the central C.I.C. office in Chungking, would cause a good deal of ill feeling, and appear superficially to be an arbitrary, foreign-imposed system of parallel control.

On the other hand, to pass these funds over to the men in the central office, who were in no sense elected from below, and who had in many cases worked actively against genuine co-operation, was still more unthinkable. For it entailed their being used to support this bureaucracy itself. We should at the same time forfeit the sympathy of all those ordinary contributors abroad who wanted their funds to go simply to the place where they were most needed for the job of war production and for bringing relief to refugees. Finally, with internal prices going up by 10 per cent or more per month, the value of all funds would have largely disappeared if and when they did penetrate the red tape and get into the field itself.

For nearly a year Alley and the other die-hard Indusco fighters resisted centralization, and continued to distribute international funds directly to the Chinese people. A storm blew up, ably fanned, denouncing the aid of Indusco Inc. (C.I.C.'s United States collecting agency) as imperialism, an insult to the Chinese race, a reversion to extra-territoriality, a step back in the process

of Chinesification. This argument, hiding the real issue under apparently progressive war tries, carried a good deal of weight with the more woolly species of liberal-minded Chinese and American. It was pushed over by the reactionaries, who, when not otherwise engaged in calling us imperialists, were busy denouncing us as sending American gold to the Chinese gangsters, though actually it had been impossible to send funds into red-occupied areas since 1940.

The support of the American people was absolutely essential to our progress, and even to our survival at this time. Funds subscribed through Indusco Inc. in New York and forwarded through the International Committee in China kept work alive in front-line depots to which the bureaucrats refused help, provided for essential training and research, and at the same time discouraged predatory politicians from taking us over in view of the unfavourable publicity that would certainly result abroad. Yet every article in popular United States magazines and newspapers seemed to add fuel to the fire of those in Chungking, who were labelling the C.I.C. as "un-Chinese". As far as Rewi himself was concerned, it was unfortunate that American publicity had necessarily to be focussed on some striking personality. Every mention of him as the central figure in C.I.C. was almost like the kiss of death to his reputation in Chungking Government circles.

So many and so vicious were the attacks made on C.I.C. during this time that many of the movement's closest friends regarded the situation as hopeless.

"Dear Rewi," wrote one of these, after an especially hard blow from the reactionaries. "It is no longer an uphill fight. It is a knock-out, and the best elements in C.I.C. are practically finished. C.I.C. will remain, only it will change its nature to something quite different."

On September 21, 1942, came what might well have been the final blow, in the form of a telegram from the Chinese Central Government:—

REWI ALLEY INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVES PAOCHI EXECUTIVE YUAN  
DECIDED TO TERMINATE YOUR SERVICES AS TECHNICAL EXPERT TO  
CIC AND TO PAY YOU THREE MONTHS EXTRA SALARY BEGINNING  
OCTOBER 1942 CHEN I

Rewi's reactions to these and other communications which he received in the field were typically optimistic.

My own hope is [he wrote to one of his closest Chinese

colleagues] that I shall be left to some quiet work in a corner, and that we shall be able to hold things together—and keep the idea anyway—until events make it imperative that there be really widespread production.

The stress on a decentralized movement for co-op industry will still be made, and my discharge from the administration may even help a real co-operative movement a bit. While there is life there is *banfa* (a way of managing). I simply know that the thing to do is to keep on keeping on in as obstinate a manner as possible. The Chinese people are ready to make the movement a success, and we should betray our trust if we left it just because certain persons have managed to get themselves into power. I know that Dr. Kung wants to have a proper co-operative movement, and that will be something big to his credit.

This game of ours is being played in the interests of the most decent democratic thing in these parts, and it is worth playing to an end.

And to a fellow-countryman:—

Back of this onslaught are quite impressive forces, that are fighting what is perhaps their last fight. I was thinking yesterday, looking down on the Yellow River from Lanchow's bare loess hills, how like this river the Chinese people are. From those heights, it seemed that the river was still. A yellow placid bar. But you know what a tempestuous emotional thing it is, and that only when one crosses it on a sheepskin raft does one realise how quickly it runs, how hopeless it is to go against the current, and how only in some quiet backwaters can one go upstream at all. At times it freezes over, and lies like a white bar of silver between the desert hills. But underneath the ice the water races along as madly as ever. There is nothing that is really static about this country. The Chinese people are an emotional people, and demand that life shall be colour, warmth and light—and a striving for ever more of these. The bureaucrat and saboteur can put up so many skilful arguments! And the field man is left knowing that none of these will work, though not always knowing what to say in reply.

I myself am bad-tempered, impatient and not so efficient as I ought to be. I often think how much better I would be if I got married and devoted the rest of my days to buying household supplies and rearing babies.

But there is a more co-operative day looming. . . .

New York's reply to Rewi's dismissal was to send him a wire inviting him to the States. Rewi was appalled by this, partly because he saw how difficult it would be for him ever to get back, and partly because it is one thing to be a publicity Buddha on paper from a distance, and quite another to play the part in flesh.

"Think of all the speeches at women's luncheon clubs! And only central heating systems to warm my bottom on, instead of this," he said, turning his ample nether portions round to his co-op stove burning co-op coal. A schoolboy pushed him gently in the belly, hoping to make him sit back on the stove; foiled, as usual, he pulled the hairs on Rewi's legs happily until I sent him down to bed.

Next day Rewi pulled out of Shuangshihpu on a truck for Chungking, leaving me with the consciousness of two very piercing blue eyes, and several crushed bones in my right hand.

Maybe it was want of a wife, maybe it was indigestion, or the fact that the coffee supply was finished, maybe it was an overdose of the sulphanilamide tablets which our New York office had sent out to cure my trachoma, maybe it was the fact that progress was slower now that the worst part of getting the school into shape was over. Anyway, during the following weeks the usefulness of existence in Shuangshihpu seemed very doubtful. Why wasn't I at home fire-fighting, or somewhere over Germany in a bomber? What had Shuangshihpu or the C.I.C. got to do with the battles for North Africa, the Solomon Islands or the Don, that were being fought at this time? I felt I simply must have an Old School Tie to wear.

Letters from Rewi didn't help. "In case I don't come back," ran one of them, "I appoint you as sole heir to the cave and all that is in it." Not very encouraging stuff. I thought of all the files in his big black trunk. Maybe if he was going to be executed I could make a great biographer.

Then the mail began to come in from America. The letters told me something quite natural, but at the same time very surprising—that the very same battles were being fought in America as we were fighting in China, and that, without knowing it, we and the people there had used precisely the same arguments to defend the movement. Just as, in Chungking, there was a group of men who wanted to get control of the movement into their own hands, for political ends, so in America there were men who wanted to concentrate all the United States funds to China into



one big stream—which could be made into one big stick, wielded in the interests of bigger and better post-war business.

Our opponents' great argument was that the dreadful International Committee—a group of foreigners—was trying to control things instead of leaving them in the hands of the Chinese.<sup>1</sup>

We answered: first, that the I.C. was founded with ten Chinese and six British and Americans, that the addition of more Americans was in answer to the demands of American money-raising groups. Second, that it was not a question of the I.C. controlling. The I.C. aids and assists the fifty thousand Chinese in the co-operatives, who are running their own workshops. The question is whether these fifty thousand should run the C.I.C., or whether five Chinese, who had nothing to do with the C.I.C. until a few months ago, should run it.

The battle is joining, so don't be surprised at what happens next.

Letters like this conferred a newer and more satisfying kind of tie than any of the Old School brand. After reading them I could go out with a new sense of adventure to explore water-power possibilities in the mountains for our new textile machinery; I could even happily sit down to the typewriter again, though the temperature in my room was below freezing, and the wind came bursting in through paper windows.

The battle was joining from the far side of the Atlantic, too. Two British Lords, two members of the House of Commons, accompanied by a host of attachés and Chinese officials, planned a trip to Paochi soon after Rewi had gone away to Chungking. Paochi C.I.C. headquarters sent through three frantic telephone calls to Andy Braid and me, recalling us for the occasion.

Andy was in one of his dour moods, working out all the answers to an old arithmetic textbook.

"If they've come to China to see the war effort," he said, looking up sternly, "let them come here and see the school. I see no reason why we should flock around them in Paochi. The Chinese have a phrase for flattering high personages—'patting the horses' bottom'. In Scotland we call it something much ruder than that, and it isn't the horse's bottom either. I'm staying here."

<sup>1</sup> The "International Committee for Chinese Industrial Co-operatives Productive Relief Fund", usually known as the International Committee or the I.C., was set up in Hong Kong in 1939 to receive funds donated from abroad and to send these funds to the industrial co-operatives.

I went to Paochi. Not to pat anybody's horse's bottom, but because I remembered how previous celebrated foreign guests had been rushed through Paochi in an attempt to keep them from seeing anything, and thought that an extra "high-nose" might help with the showmanship end.

The office when I arrived was buried thick with posters and slogans of international unity, banners with co-op names in English, sheets of statistics, and women asking what kind of cakes foreigners liked with their tea. Peter Townsend, Friends' Ambulance Unit member and Ocean Secretary since my departure for Shuangshihpu, was busy typing twenty copies of every report he could lay his hands on, while Bob Newell, another F.A.U. man attached to the technical section, drew maps showing everything that an M.P. should know about the co-operative movement in North-west China. People snatched meals when and where they could, or forgot to eat at all. Out on the streets the police and a conscripted band of helpers were busy sweeping the streets, covering unsightly buildings with sprigs of fir tree, flags, victory posters, and the inspiring inscription:—

WELCOME, LORD AILWYN, LORD TEVIOT, MR. SCRYMGEOUR-WEDDERBURN AND MR. J. J. LAWSON, TO CHINA!

Meanwhile the telephone wires and grape-vine telegraphs were busy; and various disconcerting rumours began to come in. The Provincial Governor and/or the Provincial Kuomintang Party Secretary had telephoned Chungking suggesting that the Mission should not visit Paochi at all. Deep depression! We worked doggedly on until the reply from Chungking, that the Mission must at all costs go to Paochi and be shown co-operatives, threw us into a state of near hysteria.

The next shock came from the Provincial Government's representative in Paochi, who informed the C.I.C.'s secretary:—

"The Mission may be shown one or two co-ops, but must on no account be allowed to see any co-op members, as these might be too dirty. In fact, the provincial Chairman says that we must allow as few people to be seen on the streets as possible. The people are too dirty. Our guests will have half an hour between lunch and catching the plane for Chengtu. Please arrange for your biggest co-op to receive them."

Hoping against hope, we kept this news from the sixty or more other co-ops who were preparing parades and welcomes over a radius of ten li. Meanwhile the Government representative hurried away to tear down the huts of straw and mud which

Honan famine refugees had built for themselves beside the railway line. The refugees, "too dirty" for the lords to behold, wandered away, homeless once more. . . .

"I'm so fed up with this country." It was a queer remark for a Chinese to make. It took a lot to make any Chinese speak discouragingly about China to a foreigner, and it took still more to make him do so in a train, where he might be overheard.

We were on our way to Sian to meet the great men. "I can forgive the ones who are down on us because they think co-ops are dangerous. We can fight those. But these well-educated men in public positions, many of them returned students from English and American universities, who try to bury us under foreign-style speeches and feasts because they think we will appear ridiculous—what are you to do with them! And they'll poison China's relations with Westerners before they're through—to them, all foreigners are fools and babes, believing everything they are told and seeing only what they are shown."

We arrived in Sian at 2 a.m. Huge posters and garlanded flags hung in the electric light over the station gate. Street-sweepers were out in the bitter cold. A soft light glowed from one of the windows in the Sian Guest House. Could it be Lord Ailwyn, restless with indigestion pains after the day's enforced feasting? No doubt the refugees turned out of their huts beside the Paochi railway line were lying awake too, this night.

"Fine if the refugees and Lord Ailwyn could only get together, somehow, eh?"

In the kitchen of the C.I.C. office I finished off the week's typing by candlelight, and cycled up to the Guest House next morning at dawn with a package of manuscript tucked away in my overcoat. Nothing dangerous. . . . No military information . . . No complaints. . . . Just plain reports on North-west co-ops. But we couldn't afford to arouse suspicion by handing them over too openly.

The guards saluted. Swing doors were opened by boys in livery. I made my way upstairs to the rooms occupied by the Mission's Press followers, knocked on the door of the *Chicago Daily News*, and found Art Steele smoking in bed. After a struggle Art remembered me from Hankow days, when he and I had belonged to rival organizations.

"How's news, Art?"

"Why, fair, you know, fair," replied Art laconically. "Yester-

day we went to the front. It was a swell trip. There was liqueur brandy and plenty to eat on the special train. When we got to Tungkwan the paths going up to the front were all nicely swept. After some more drinks there was a mock battle, done by electricity from the control house. There were pink flashes for bombs and blue flashes for shell-bursts. An officer explained the whole thing to us in Chinese, while another officer wound the handle of a sound machine that explained the whole thing in English. Then we got back into the train. After we had gone, the Japs shelled the mock-battlefield."

"Did the lords enjoy it?"

"As far as I can see they are just plain tired more than anything else—no time even to digest their imitation-foreign meals. But I haven't succeeded in talking to them since we left Chungking. They have their own special part of planes, trains and dinner-tables."

I worked out a plan of campaign for next day with Art, and caught the next train back to Paochi. But not before having crashed the best breakfast I'd had since 1938, Hankow: coffee, marmalade and all the rest. And not before having heard well-bred Englishmen discuss the weather in a way I'd not heard it discussed since 1937, Oxford.

Paochi was still in no mean state of agitation. Bob Newell, Quaker and pacifist, was poised over a banner reading

#### EXTERMINATE ALL JAPS FROM THE PACIFIC AREA

as I walked into the room.

"Don't you think that a little strong?" he asked.

"It means South Pacific Area," explained the Chinese secretary, from the desk where he was touching up a speech of welcome to be delivered by the local General.

It was a grand speech—more clichés per square foot than I would have believed possible. Peter Townsend made such a stirring translation from it that they translated the translation back into Chinese and gave that to the General to read instead of the original.

Peter was so pleased! "Think how I'll feel when all that comes out," he crowed. But in the end he didn't get the chance to hear it. Next morning, at zero hour, looking much more the genuine lord than either Ailwyn or Teviot, Peter successfully com-

mandeered a car in which to take the newspapermen for a surreptitious tour of Paochi while the others were at lunch.

Luncheon over, the big Douglas plane was warming up on the airfield ready to take off. The officials were tired but self-congratulatory on having got the Mission successfully onto the airfield without letting them see more than one or two tiresome co-ops for more than a few minutes each.

Lawson, veteran Labour M.P., took Bob Newell and me aside under the wing of the plane for a chat.

"Is there any chance of you people being pushed down under?" he inquired, turning down a meaningful thumb.

We edged farther away from the official hawks.

"Of course we'd heard something of the sort before," he went on, "but it's easy to see for ourselves what you're up against after today's show."

"We aren't much to look at yet," I ventured. "That's what they feel bad about more than anything. You can't blame them for being sensitive in a way."

"I'm an old man," said Lawson; "I remember when I was a lad putting my nose against the little window of a grocery store in our town. Now that store has spread all over Britain. That's the co-ops. Smallness isn't anything to be afraid of, at first. . . .

"My advice is this." He waddled away farther out of earshot, moving with a tough miner's gait and sticking out the chin that had brought him to the top of his grade and sent him back undefeated to the House of Commons for nearly twenty years.

"Hang on now at all costs. It's the people that are coming out on top everywhere in this war.

"Our Mission has been hustled around pretty much on this trip, but I can't say I haven't learned anything. They showed me what they said was a railway workers' union in Sian, but I could see it wasn't a real union—the men didn't dare speak to me. In one factory I asked a worker if he had anything to complain of. 'No,' he says, 'nothing.' 'Then you're a fool,' I told him. 'When I was a boy I worked in a factory like this, and I had a hell of a lot to complain of.' The interpreter wouldn't interpret this at first, but I made him put it over.

"And then we did see the good airy workroom of your army-blanket co-op. And we did notice the co-op members at the station to meet us turned away by soldiers. Hang on, I say. I've got all your reports in my pocket, and I'll be writing you up when I get back home."

There was plenty of time for conversation, as Peter's car with all the newspapermen had got utterly lost. I feigned complete ignorance, of course. The officials were very angry, and used all sorts of unkind words to minor officials, who were supposed to have been keeping watch over the newsmen.

After forty minutes' waiting, Lord Ailwyn was heard to remark to the Chinese in charge, "It's a shame to keep you and me waiting like this." Poor man, it was past his tea-time.

Everyone climbed into the plane, which taxied down the runway, leaving the newsmen behind. I thought agonizingly of what the Paochi officials would do to Peter when they found him with the missing men, and of the disappointment of millions of readers when Art Steele and the rest, stranded in the inaccessible Northwest, failed to produce the daily columns.

Art was thinking just the same thing, judging by the beads of terror on his face as the car snorted painfully up the hill and onto the airfield plateau. Too late! The plane was already 500 yards away, and moving upwind. We waved handkerchiefs and yelled hopelessly. The car charged the plane like a mouse after an eagle. The eagle swept majestically forward, then veered to one side, was overtaken by the mouse, and swallowed its collection of embarrassed worms. Art stopped mopping his forehead for long enough to wave his handkerchief at the window as the plane swept past us again and took off.

Peter came back sitting on the spare wheel behind the car, trying to pretend he wasn't there.

"Close thing, Peter," I said, as he hopped off, visibly shaken. "You might have been locked up for that. We've renounced extra-territorial rights, you know."

"Stop being silly and let's go for a bath."

Peter under steam heat was still full of the enthusiasm shown by his newsmen for the co-ops.

"The battle is joining, George," came floating over the top of the bath-house's wooden partition.

"The battle is joining, Peter."

"Incredible to see that kind of preserved-fowl type in Paochi though, eh?"

"If you could see yourself just from Oxford you'd seem a pretty queer bird to yourself, probably."

Peter stirred in the water. "God, yes! And Oxford seems queer from here, too, doesn't it? Rugger, beer in silver tankards, honeyed muffins for tea, white flannels and music in punts on the

river. Bump suppers, champagne, bonfires of lavatory seats. . . . Mortar boards for Pass Mods. Gowns flying out behind the bicycles of those on their way to old Brethers' lectures on International Relations. Reading about the fall of Addis Ababa in front of the Common Room fire. Surprise on learning that a Double Blue is a necessary qualification for the best colonial posts, while two college game colours (squash racquets as one acceptable) will do for the Indian Civil Service. I suppose all that's a thing of the past, now."

Silence and steam.

"This is a relief, isn't it? First bath I've had this winter."

"The conception of relief, as such, is obsolete," said Peter.

"Must be productive relief or nothing, these days. Mere distribution of food or money is demoralizing."

"But you can't have productive relief in a bath."

"When you've been in Chinà as long as I have, my boy," said Peter, handing his towel to a muscular half-naked attendant, "you'll know more. Now rub my back," he added to the man. "If you could see the black pellicules now rolling off my hips, you'd see what I mean by production."

"The people are dirty, Peter."

"Yes. Thank God we're dirty. It's a comforting thought."

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